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### Women Who Wear the Breeches: The REpresentation of Female Civil War Soldiers in Mid-Nineteenth Century Newspapers

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The College at Brockport  
State University of New York

**“Women Who Wear the Breeches”**  
**The Representation of Female Civil War Soldiers in Mid-Nineteenth Century**  
**Newspapers**

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Master’s in American History

Department of History

by  
MAJ Danielle Leone-Poe  
U.S. Army Nurse Corps

Brockport, New York  
May 2019

## **Dedication**

For Ellen and Rosalee, my late beloved mother and aunt. And for Fred. These incredibly strong female role models gave me the gift of curiosity, the desire for lifelong learning, and the courage to do what is hard. For my dear brother Frank. For Katy, my daughter, who is my inspiration for everything. For Ava, my granddaughter, who is the future of strong women in America. Without them all, this project would not have been realized.

### **Abstract**

It has been estimated that approximately 400 women disguised themselves as men and fought as soldiers in the Civil War. Using newspaper articles from the mid-nineteenth century, this essay tells the story of these soldiers and demonstrates how wartime public knowledge of them was widespread and that they were regarded positively considering the strict gender boundaries that they crossed. It also argues that the estimate of the number of female soldiers should be much higher than previous historians have reported.

Keywords: Female, Soldier, Woman, Cross-dressing, Military, Civil War, Victorian, Antebellum

## Preface

I began this project with some ideas about what the evidence would show about female Civil War soldiers. First, I thought I would find widespread evidence that women who disguised themselves as male soldiers were, what we refer to today as, transgender or lesbian. I also thought I would find that female soldiers were, by and large, women's rights advocates. These assumptions, would be more accurately described as hopes. Being that I am a lesbian female soldier with a fascination for suffragist and Civil War history, I wanted the female soldiers to be these things. Somehow, I hoped that they would be historical reflections of my own life. In fact, neither of these assumptions was revealed during the course of my research. Female Civil War soldiers were, on the whole, neither lesbian (or transgender) or women's rights advocates. They were simply solving a problem using the only means available to them.

I began this study by searching hundreds of newspaper articles about female soldiers in the *Library of Congress Chronicling America* historical newspaper database. I developed a spreadsheet of these articles to include name, alias, allegiance, regiment, motivations, and any other distinguishing or important information that could be gleaned from them. Many articles were reprinted in several different papers and other articles had enough details to conclude that the female soldier was the same woman that had been documented in other papers. My research, however, culminated with what I believe to be 90 accounts of distinct female soldiers. Patterns emerged when I viewed the accounts of these women side-by-side. The primary source data, coupled with secondary source material from many accomplished historians, informed the conclusions in this study. As the stories of these women were revealed by the evidence, my preconceived notions fell away and a clearer picture of female

Civil War soldiers emerged. Many questions arose during the course of my research that were impossible to explore within the scope of this project. I will, however, delve into them in future projects.

Many thanks to Dr. Allison Parker and Dr. James Spiller who supported me throughout this process with encouragement, guidance, and editing.

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## Introduction

Hundreds of women marched steadily up to the mouth of a hundred cannon pouring out fire and smoke, shot and shell, mowing down the advancing hosts like grass; men, horses, and colors going down in confusion, disappearing in clouds of smoke; the only sound, the screaming of shells, the crackling of musketry, the thunder of artillery, through all this women were sustained by the enthusiasm born of love of country and liberty.

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joselyn Gage, “History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. II”

It has been widely estimated that about four hundred women disguised themselves as men, and fought in the Union and Confederate armies during the American Civil War.<sup>1</sup> This estimate has persisted for years despite evidence that many more women may have fought incognito. An exact number of female soldiers will never be known simply due to the fact that the women who served during that war struggled to keep their female identities secret. Only those who were discovered, and recorded as discharged from the army can be counted. Even this accounting has proven difficult. Much of the documentation that existed in newspaper articles from the time, did not always provide names or enough identifying detail to know which references were duplicates and which were distinct cases.

It may seem surprising that female soldiers were often treated favorably in wartime newspapers because strict gender conventions in antebellum American generally prohibited non-conformity. Those people who strayed from social gender norms were very often criminalized or considered mentally defective. Female Civil War soldiers served at a time when cross-dressing in men’s clothes was illegal in



many jurisdictions. Women were expected to be homemakers, and to remain in the domestic sphere of society. Despite the fact that female soldiers abandoned many of these social norms, they were generally regarded positively when they were discovered. Hundreds of wartime articles in newspapers from across the country empathetically reported about cross-dressing female soldiers, portraying them as heroes and cultural treasures. Sometimes an empathetic tone was merely implied by newspapers that simply recounted the stories of women soldiers without castigatory themes. Wartime print media transcended mid-nineteenth century gender conventions by covering the stories of female soldiers without the antipathy leveled against most gender bending women by the general public. Astonishingly, in a culture with the strictest of gender expectations, female soldiers were treated well by the press and the public despite the numerous societal norms that they abandoned.

The extensive coverage of female soldiering demonstrates that the phenomenon was quite common during the Civil War. Based on voluminous newspaper coverage of women in uniform during the war, a transgressive act that they intended to keep secret, the estimate of total female soldiers should be higher than four hundred, perhaps in the thousands. This argument is bolstered by the fact that the common estimate of female soldiers as a subset of the thousands of soldiers in arms during the Civil War included only Union soldiers.

There has been little historical research on the topic of female Civil War soldiers, save the seminal work of DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook (which I invoke frequently in this project) and Richard H. Hall's scholarship that followed.

The painstaking early twenty-first century research conducted by Blanton and Cook resurrected the story of female Civil War soldiers, which had long since receded from the public consciousness. Most female soldiers engaged in their ruse never intending to be discovered. The clandestine nature of soldiering in disguise, therefore, resulted in relatively little tangible evidence of the phenomenon. Historical research complications notwithstanding, there is evidence that the wartime public was acutely aware of the fact that women were taking up arms in the conflict. Newspaper accounts were commonplace and were a reflection of the public's fascination with cross-dressing female soldiers.

This paper is organized into four chapters. In "Gender Norms in the Mid-Nineteenth Century" I explore the cultural milieu within which women lived in antebellum America. In "An Overview of Female Civil War Soldiering" I provide an overview of female soldiering using the accounts of Civil War era newspapers. In "Stories of Female Soldiers in the Press" I discuss the ways in which contemporary newspapers reported these stories. Finally, in "Conclusions" I summarize the findings of my research, make informed speculations, and explore some of the questions raised by the evidence. I begin with the world in which would-be female soldiers lived. They were born, reared, and ultimately enlisted in a culture imbued with Victorian era gender conventions. What were the cultural gender norms that female soldiers challenged when they disguised themselves as men and enlisted for combat duty in the American Civil War?

## Chapter 1

### Gender Norms in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

So long as she is nervous, fickle, capricious, delicate, diffident and dependent, man will worship and adore her. Her weakness is her strength, and her true art is to cultivate and improve that weakness.

– George Fitzhugh, “Sociology for the South: or, The Failure of Free Society”

Women in the mid-nineteenth century were not full citizens of the United States. Predominant cultural attitudes about gender starkly divided acceptable norms for women and men. Women were relegated primarily to domestic spaces and prohibited from most public activity and political participation. According to historian Lori D. Ginzberg, “women could neither vote nor, if married, own, buy, or sell property or make contracts, and they were neither required nor permitted to perform military service, serve on juries, or work on the public roads.”<sup>2</sup> Cultural gender norms in mid-nineteenth century America emphasized the dependence of women on men. In pre-war America, historian Catherine Clinton explained, “the economy as well as the political culture had little room for autonomous women. In most cases, females of all classes were attached to households, dependent on males for status and wealth.”<sup>3</sup> Women were then considered to be dependent by nature, mentally and physically incapable of participating in vigorous activities or in political life. Many at the time believed that women required the supervision and protection of men in order to survive. Social ideologue George Fitzhugh explained that woman’s “subservience to and dependence on man, is necessary to her very existence.”<sup>4</sup> Most

people accepted that women were akin to children, dependent on men for money and protection and unable to make decisions for themselves. Contemporary reasoning, therefore, asserted that a woman should no sooner be enfranchised than should a child. In antebellum America, according to Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, “Women lived, worked, and loved in a political and legal system of inequality, denied many of the fundamental rights and responsibilities of citizenship.”<sup>5</sup> While considered unfit to be citizens, women were supremely qualified to be wives and mothers.

Most considered women to be more delicate, moral, and nurturing than men. These qualities best suited them to be mothers and homemakers. Women were confined to domestic roles, rearing children, and attending to the moral upbringing of the entire family. Despite this weighty responsibility, they had very little social or civic power. Clinton wrote, “Instead of liberty and equality, subordination and restriction were drummed into women...Women’s only reward was lavish exaltation of their vital and unmatched contributions to the civic state as mothers. This rejuvenated ethic was accompanied by a confinement to the domestic sphere.”<sup>6</sup> In antebellum American society women were paradoxically revered on the one hand and imprisoned on the other by their station in life as wives and mothers.

There were regional differences in cultural gender norms between the North and the South prior to the Civil War. In a very general sense, southern women were held to an even stricter standard of femaleness than northern women. Southerners generally regarded their women to be more civilized, refined, and illustrative of traditional feminine ideals than, as one southern newspaper described, “the bloomers,

pulpit orators, free lovers, and womens' rights females" of the north.<sup>7</sup> Southerners often regarded northern urban culture with disdain, insinuating that northern women were less feminine than southern women due to their exposure to city life and industrialization, which sometimes included work outside the home. Critics of urban, non-slaveholding culture, like Fitzhugh, also denounced the North for, what they described as, its unfeminine women. They lambasted northern men for allowing women to foray into public life as temperance and women's rights advocates, as well as abolitionists. To Fitzhugh this was abnormal since, "Woman naturally shrinks from public gaze, and from the struggle and competition of life. Free society has thrown her into the arena of industrial war, robbed her of the softness of her own sex."<sup>8</sup> Historian Kyle N. Osborn wrote about the memoirs of southerners who traveled to the North. He explained, that some felt the situation with female activism in the North was "yet another supposed sign of the region's cultural degradation."<sup>9</sup> In March 1854 the Baton Rouge *Daily Comet* lamented the changing times and criticized the stirring women's rights movement in the North as "the folly of progression, we must be told that woman has a right by natural laws to unsex herself and enter the horse jockeying arena of politics."<sup>10</sup> People in the South generally espoused a much stricter ideal of womanhood and were more intolerant of those who strayed from the ideal.

The notion of being "unsexed" was common when referring to women who challenged socially accepted gender conventions in antebellum America. In a series of articles published in the Montana Post in 1865 entitled *Vigilantes of Montana*,

Thomas Dimsdale wrote of women witnessing criminality and death, “Such sights are unfit for them to behold, and in rough and masculine business of every kind, women should bear no part. It unsexes them and destroys the most lovely parts of their character.”<sup>11</sup> According to *Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language 1828 Online Edition*, the word “unsex” meant “to deprive of the sex, or to make otherwise than the sex commonly is.” By the mid-nineteenth century, that dispassionate definition had been supplanted by a distinctly negative connotation in American society. Writers usually applied the term pejoratively when describing women and men who did not conform to socially accepted gender norms. The term “unsexed” was used frequently in newspapers when referring to women who spoke out about changing gender conventions, abolition, or temperance or who pursued traditionally male professions. In December 1854, the *Georgetown Weekly News* exclaimed, “We have no sympathy for that woman who will so far unsex herself as to appear before the world either as a public speaker, a reverend or an M.D.”<sup>12</sup> The *Port Tobacco Times and Charles County Advertiser* described an abolitionist convention in Syracuse New York as, “a promiscuous gathering of whites, blacks, and unsexed women.”<sup>13</sup> In an 1855 article highly critical of northern women, the *Weekly Comet* described, “strong minded women; who would, if they could, unsex themselves to quarrel with men in the pulpit and on the stump, about politics and religion.”<sup>14</sup> In July 1863 a female newspaper correspondent wrote of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other women’s rights advocates in New York, “I have no patience with women who so unsex themselves, and step out of their proper sphere to mingle

in the dirty business of politics.” Of their cause, she wrote, “[women’s] right to vote! Did you ever listen to more stupendous nonsense?”<sup>15</sup> As evidenced by this, and the writings of other female authors, it is clear that even most women were not advocating, publicly, for an increase in women’s rights. The idea of women voting was blasphemous and the rhetoric surrounding it incendiary. Rather than to suffer societal wrath, most women accepted their disenfranchisement and rationalized it as their moral obligation.

In addition to the stark differences in the social expectations between men and women, there were distinct visual differences, most predominantly highlighted by the way each was expected to dress in the years preceding the Civil War. Regarding mid-nineteenth century apparel conventions Clinton explained, “those women who strayed too far from mainstream fashion were labeled deviant and dangerous. Clothing reflected the status and propriety of ladies, and men demanded that the women in their families observe the rules of decorum.”<sup>16</sup> In antebellum America it was scandalous for women to wear pants or attire otherwise incongruent with Victorian gender conventions. The veering of women away from socially accepted customs of dress, was threatening to American men and to many women. According to Clinton, “Men feared that the ‘loosening’ of dress codes might reflect female immorality.” Many men were vehemently opposed to women wearing trousers. They advanced the falsely equivalent narrative that if allowed to literally wear pants, women would figuratively “wear the pants” in the family thus emasculating men who would quickly be “reduced to ‘petticoats.’”<sup>17</sup> The term “unsexed” was used frequently in newspaper

articles not only when discussing women who strayed from traditionally female behaviors, but also when referring to women who simply wore non-traditional clothing. The newspaper, *The Polynesian* reported in 1857, “Among the ladies in travesty I noticed a decided majority preferred the pantaloons...Nothing [is] more bewitching than these *manmaids*, who unsex themselves.”<sup>18</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century, laws specifically prohibiting cross-dressing were not the norm. Instead, state laws and local ordinances for infractions such as vagrancy and indecency were increasingly enforced against those persons not conforming to the culturally acceptable attire associated with their biological sex. According to William N. Eskridge Jr. and Nan D. Hunter, “No state law specifically targeted cross dressing per se, but ‘disguise’ laws were sometimes applied to cross-dressers.”<sup>19</sup> New York passed a statute in 1854 prohibiting anyone appearing on a road or highway from “having his face painted, discolored, covered, or concealed, or being otherwise disguised, in a manner calculated to prevent his being identified.”<sup>20</sup> This language was vague enough to encompass many forms of disguise. In mid-nineteenth century American culture, where clothing was a very distinct signal of gender, simply wearing clothing associated with the opposite sex would have been a more effective disguise than it was in later decades. Because cross-dressing was frequently associated with deviance, men and women were sometimes arrested for it using the laws intended for vagrants or those who engaged in acts of “indecency.” Two early pieces of legislation with language specifically prohibiting cross-dressing included San Francisco’s 1863 indecency order which indicated a person could not



appear in public in “a dress not belonging to his or her sex” and an 1864 indecency ordinance, passed in St. Louis with some of the exact same language.<sup>21</sup> It read, “Whoever shall, in this city, appear in any public place in a state of nudity, or in a dress not belonging to his or her sex...shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.”<sup>22</sup> It has been difficult for historians to quantify the number of cross-dressers arrested under the guise of vagrancy or indecency in the antebellum era. One woman’s story, however, was chronicled well in newspapers across the country.

Between December 1852 and mid-1853, Emma Snodgrass was a sensation in the nation’s newspapers. Snodgrass turned up all over New England wearing men’s clothing, sometimes using the aliases George Green and Henry Lewis.<sup>23</sup> In December 1853 she was “taken to the office of the Chief of Police, and last night remained at the house of one of the city officers who will see that she is again returned to her father’s house.”<sup>24</sup> The “motives of the girl for persisting in such improper conduct” were unclear.<sup>25</sup> Shortly after this incident Emma was arrested twice in Boston and “confined in the lock-up.”<sup>26</sup> On at least one of those occasions she was charged with vagrancy. On one occasion she was accompanied by a woman named Harriet French, who also wore men’s clothing, and “was sentenced to the House of Reformation for six months.” This sentence was commuted after she promised to leave the city.<sup>27</sup>

Snodgrass’ wardrobe was enough of a sensation that reports of her simply being seen in various parts of the Northeast were recorded in the newspaper. In May 1853, one paper wrote, “Emma Snodgrass, the young lady in pants, appeared in

Buffalo, on Sunday last, habited in a very becoming and genteel attire. She is about four feet ten inches in height.”<sup>28</sup> These two sentences were the entirety of the article. There was a distinct absence of pejorative language in articles about this cross-dressing woman. Most papers, in fact, depicted Snodgrass as a sympathetic character. She seemed to have garnered public support as well. Her exoneration of vagrancy charges and subsequent release from court was received “much to the satisfaction of a crowded audience.”<sup>29</sup> Perhaps it was her diminutive stature and plucky nature that accounted for the lack of public hostility and the media’s positive depiction of Snodgrass.

Despite the position of the legal power structure, which in some cases advocated the arrest of women wearing traditionally male clothing, the reported response to Snodgrass’ exoneration may be an indication of public ambivalence to penalizing all women who experimented in this way, at least in the American Northeast. This may be early evidence of a trend toward the tacit acceptance of strong, determined women who challenged gender stereotypes.

Since the 1840s, some women had been advocating for female dress reform.<sup>30</sup> In the 1850s, activists described how socially acceptable female dress was a tool for hindering women’s participation in business and political affairs.<sup>31</sup> Akin to a uniform, male and female dress told the observer what role the wearer played in life. In addition to being a visual cue to a person’s station in life, women’s clothing was also a physical barrier to aspirations of gender equality. Famed suffragist Elizabeth

Cady Stanton wrote the following with regard to acceptable standards of female dress:

She is the hopeless martyr to the inventions of some Parisian imp of fashion. Her tight waist and long, trailing skirts deprive her of all freedom of breath and motion. No wonder man prescribes her sphere. She needs his aid at every turn.<sup>32</sup>

This is illustrative of how women's dress reinforced dependency on men.

Traditionally female dress was, in a multitude of ways, a significant hindrance to the movement toward more equitable gender roles.

Considering the gender conventions noted previously women were, of course, prohibited from serving in the military in the mid-nineteenth century. The Union Army's regulatory guidance for acceptable soldier recruits read,

Any free white male person above the age of eighteen and under thirty-five years, being at least five feet three inches high, effective, able-bodied, sober, free from disease, of good character and habits, and with a competent knowledge of the English language, may be enlisted. (US Department of the Army Regulations of 1861, Revised, art. XL, par. 929)

In fact, the only mention of women in army regulation read, "Four women will be allowed to each company as washerwomen, and will receive one ration per day each" (US Department of the Army Regulations of 1861, Revised, art. XIII, par. 128). The position of army laundress was a hold-over from the British Army during the American revolution. Most were from the lowest socioeconomic classes of society and illiterate. It is likely that they were permitted near the fighting because their low societal stature required less strict adherence to female gender norms. Considering the cultural stereotype that washer women had loose morals, there may also have

been an expectation that they would perform sexual services to the men.<sup>33</sup> Other laundresses were the wives of soldiers in the regiment.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the war women were otherwise discouraged, and sometimes completely prohibited, from being anywhere near an army camp. In January 1865 the *Weekly North Iowa Times* reported, “A recent order by General Sheridan prohibits the wives or female friends of officers or soldiers in his command from remaining within the lines of the army without special orders from headquarters.”<sup>35</sup>

At the start of the war even military nursing was done exclusively by male soldiers. It was only when those men were needed at the battlefield that the Army allowed female civilians to nurse the wounded in hospitals far from the front. In August 1861 the newspaper *National Republican* reported that the U.S. Congress enacted a law which stated “in general or permanent hospitals female nurses may be substituted for soldiers, when, in the opinion of the surgeon general or medical officer in charge, it is expedient to do so.”<sup>36</sup> This is evidence that gender role prescriptions were giving way to military necessity.

Considering the gender conventions and rules that women were expected to abide and the backlash endured by those who did not, it is astonishing that many women took up arms in combat in the Civil War. On the whole, people considered women to be weak, childlike, and passive. Gender appropriate attire restricted their ability to engage in physical activity, and the law officially forbade them from military service (save as laundresses). What, then, was a woman who wished to fight

for her country to do? Some of them donned soldier uniforms, eschewed the aid of men, and went to war beside them.

## Chapter 2

### An Overview of Female Civil War Soldiering

...history is reticent about women who were common soldiers, who bore arms, belonged to regiments, and took part in battles on the same terms as men, though hardly a war has been waged without women soldiers in the ranks.

– Stieg Larsson, “The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest”

Renowned suffragist Mary A. Livermore spent the war years as a nurse and agent of the Sanitary Commission, “a private relief agency created by federal legislation on June 18, 1861 to support sick and wounded soldiers of the U.S. Army during the American Civil War.”<sup>37</sup> Livermore is often credited with reciting the most frequently used estimate of the number of women who disguised themselves and fought in the war. In 1890 she penned a memoir of her experiences during the war in which she wrote,

Some one [*sic*] has stated the number of women soldiers known to the service as little less than four hundred. I cannot vouch for the correctness of this estimate, but I am convinced that a larger number of women disguised themselves and enlisted in the service, for one cause or other, than was dreamed of. Entrenched in secrecy, and regarded as men, they were sometimes revealed as women, by accident or casualty.<sup>38</sup>

In her detailed first-hand account, Livermore also reported having personally encountered female soldiers in the ranks. Her experiences were limited, however, by her federal position which primarily brought her in contact with Union troops. Livermore had little, if any, experience with Confederate troops.

Until recently, historians painted a one-dimensional picture of female Civil War soldiers, if they addressed the phenomenon at all. In fact, female soldiers hailed from all over the republic and fought in both the Union and Confederate armies. They were White, African American, Cuban American, and presumably Native American. They were unique individuals and their enlistment motivations, character of service, and dispositions were as varied as those of their male counterparts.

The relative lack of autobiographical documentation regarding these women derives from the fact that they concealed their military service. Additionally, they had a lower level of literacy than male soldiers. It is therefore probable that they wrote fewer letters, kept fewer journals, and produced fewer memoirs than other soldiers. In the mid-nineteenth century women of lower-class status, in particular, were not generally encouraged or afforded the opportunity to be educated. Like their male counterparts, female soldiers frequently hailed from the countryside and from families with lower economic means. They simply did not write letters or keep diaries at the same rate as male soldiers. Historian Richard H. Hall explained that “their education level played an important role in how much of a historical record an individual woman left behind.”<sup>39</sup> Blanton and Cook explained the reduced percentage of personal accounts written by female soldiers this way:

The relative absence of written material attributed to female combatants is striking...like the men with whom they served, the majority of women soldiers hailed from agrarian, working-class, or immigrant backgrounds where no premium was placed on educational attainment for women. Thus, women soldiers probably had a much lower literacy rate than their male comrades. Additionally, when they assumed male identities and joined the army, women soldiers usually severed contact with family and friends at home.<sup>40</sup>

The severing of contact with family and friends stands to reason considering the gender boundaries that were crossed by female soldiers. Furthermore, the fewer people who knew their secret life as a soldier, the less likely they were to be discovered. Another reason for familial estrangement might have been to reduce the chance that a family member would come looking for them and divulge their secret.

One soldier who did not sever contact with her family back home was Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, who took the name Lyons Wakeman and served in the 153<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, New York State Volunteers. Historian Lauren Cook Burgess compiled the letters written between Sarah and her family in Broome County, New York. Unlike in future wars, soldier letters were not censored during the Civil War. Much of what we know of the horrors of that war has come in the form of soldier letters.

Wakeman's letters, therefore, like her male counterparts' were startlingly frank about her experiences. Like hundreds of thousands of other soldiers who succumbed to disease, the twenty-one-year-old died from chronic diarrhea in a military hospital in New Orleans on May 22, 1864 after completing two years of service in the Union army.<sup>41</sup> According to Matthew Gallman, "She went to her grave with her masquerade intact."<sup>42</sup> It was not until over a century after the war ended that her letters became public. Cook Burgess explains that they were kept in an attic all of

that time, “by family members who considered her somewhat of a black sheep and her adventures in male attire a bit strange.”<sup>43</sup>

Like Sarah Rosetta Wakeman the vast majority of female soldiers for whom documentation exists were white and fought for the Union. In November 1862 it was reported in the Evansville Indiana *Daily Journal*, “A soldier passing under the name of Charles Freeman, being under medical treatment at Louisville, was discovered to be a female. She had served with distinction in the Ohio 52<sup>nd</sup> infantry.”<sup>44</sup> In January 1863 the *Ohio Statesman* reported that “Two females in soldier clothes were detected at Camp Chase....They were taken to the city prison to await their transportation to their homes in Cleveland.”<sup>45</sup> In March 1864 Edmonia Gates reported, according to the *Evening Star*, that she served as a drummer boy in Wilson’s Zouaves (New York 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment under the command of Col. William Wilson).<sup>46</sup> In August that same year the *New York Times* ran a story that originally ran in the *Memphis Argus* the week prior. Two women, Jane Short (alias Charley Davis) and Lou Morris (alias Bill Morris) in “Federal uniform” were arrested after being discovered in the 21<sup>st</sup> Missouri Infantry.<sup>47</sup> These are but a few of the many newspaper stories about women who fought in the Union army.

Fewer accounts exist of Confederate women who fought as soldiers. This is not necessarily because there were fewer of them. Stronger gender conventions in the South may have made a difference in the detection of women in disguise because it was harder to see what one did not expect to see. Also, there may have been less coverage in the newspapers due to the strong cultural gender bias in the South. The



reasons for fewer documented reports of women soldiers in the southern ranks are purely speculative at this time. Some newspapers, however, did cover stories of Confederate female soldiers. In August 1861 a female was found among the soldiers of a Union regiment. During questioning, it was revealed that she was a Confederate spy. An embedded correspondent for the Cincinnati *Commercial* wrote:

On Saturday last we discovered a female soldier in our camp. She enlisted in Company D, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May last, and has been doing soldier duty ever since...On being closely questioned, she confessed that she was a spy, had consistent communication with the rebels, that she is a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle; through that order, members of which she finds every where [*sic*], she has found the means of forwarding her letters to the rebels. She says she knew full well that the penalty for being a spy was death, and that she is ready whenever they wish to shoot her.<sup>48</sup>

Like so many newspaper articles about female soldiers, the subject was left unnamed and her fate is unknown. In February 1862 the *Athens Post* reported, “A train loaded with troops ran off the track four or five miles above Athens...and a female, disguised in soldier’s garb, who was on the platforms, was so badly injured that she died in a few hours...she gave her name as Lizzie Knight.”<sup>49</sup> In May 1862 The *Wilmington Journal* reprinted a story from the New Orleans *True Delta* which read, “Yesterday a female dressed in soldier’s clothes, surrendered herself to the Mayor....She gave Arnold as her name....She claims to have been in the battles of Manassas and Belmont.”<sup>50</sup> The next month the Yorkville, South Carolina *Enquirer* reported, “a fair blue-eyed girl, dressed all like a ‘brave soldier boy,’ who had determined to kill a Yankee” was discovered on a train full of other Confederate soldiers. She reported that other “girls” from Alabama had already gone to war.<sup>51</sup> In

January 1863, the Union army captured Marian McKenzie (alias Harry Fitzallen). *The Daily Evansville Journal* reported that she had served in the “rebel army for over a year” and was wearing a cavalry uniform.<sup>52</sup> Another female soldier was found among “about ninety rebel prisoners” in December 1863.<sup>53</sup> Mary A. Wright and Margaret Henry were captured “with a squad of fourteen bridge burners” and were remanded to the military prison at Nashville in March 1865.<sup>54</sup> *The Potter Journal* reported in May 1865, “Two female rebel soldiers were recently captured in Tennessee and are now in the Nashville military prison.”<sup>55</sup> While there were fewer articles about female Confederate soldiers, likely due to the gender bias that prevailed in the South, articles like these clearly demonstrate that the phenomenon did exist among Confederate troops.

There were even fewer reports of black female soldiers. This was in large part due to the fact that there were simply fewer opportunities for black soldiers to serve. There were no black regiments in the Confederate Army and the relatively small number of black regiments in the Union army made for fewer places for African American female soldiers to enlist as opposed to their white counterparts. According to Hall, “that opportunity was less available to black women. ‘Colored’ regiments were fewer in number and they appeared after the war began.”<sup>56</sup> Editorial racial bias may have also contributed to the lack of documentation of black female soldiers in newspapers during the war. Renowned Civil War historian and author Eric Foner explained, “racism was every bit as pervasive in the antebellum North as the slave-holding South.”<sup>57</sup> Like so many other historical phenomena, it is probable that the

telling of female soldier stories (or, in this case, not telling) in the mainstream press was racialized. Black females were not considered to be weak and delicate homemakers and mothers, and their gender was not revered in the same way as that of white women. They were not held to the same ideals of womanhood and, unlike their white counterparts, were widely considered to be suited to field work and hard labor. They could not be unsexed like white women because their gender was not strictly demarcated from black males who were largely feminized by white society. For two centuries black slave women in the Americas were perceived by whites as virtually interchangeable with black men.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, the stories of black female soldiers may have been less newsworthy than those of white women who were considered to be straying afar from normal gender expectations. While African Americans were no longer enslaved in the North, there remained no shortage of racism. Blanton and Cook were only able to document the existence of three black female soldiers. One of them remained nameless and served in the 29<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Infantry (Colored).<sup>59</sup> She was discovered after giving birth while on duty. “Her baffled sergeant asked,” according to Hall, ““Did you ever hear of A Man having a child[?]””<sup>60</sup> Maria Lewis served in the 8<sup>th</sup> New York Cavalry for 18 months posing as a white man and Lizzie Hoffman was arrested shortly after she enlisted in the 45<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry.<sup>61</sup> The number of reported black female soldiers is most assuredly not reflective of their actual number. The overall count of female Civil War soldiers would, undoubtedly, be much higher if a more accurate count of black female Union soldiers was calculated into the estimate.

Many questions arise considering all of the documentary evidence that female soldiers were a phenomenon during the war of secession. It is hard to understand why a Victorian era woman would have wished to enlist in the army and live the repugnant life of a Civil War soldier. It is also hard to contemplate why this same woman would go to great lengths to serve a nation that “neither expected nor desired [her] military service” and why she would put herself at the almost certain mercy of disease, dismemberment, and death to fight for a cause that did not include the attainment of her own enfranchisement.<sup>62</sup> For answers to these questions, we must examine the scant evidence of their motivations.

Women’s reasons for donning male attire and enlisting in the army were as idiosyncratic as the women themselves. Like their male counterparts, many women desired to channel their patriotism by fighting for their government’s cause. Jane Short and Lou Morris reported that “their enlistment was prompted by patriotic motives only; they wanted to do a small share towards ‘licking the rebs,’ as Lou said.”<sup>63</sup> The aforementioned Confederate soldier called Arnold reported that she was “collecting material for a history of the war, and she adopted male attire as the plan best calculated to enable her to carry out her design.”<sup>64</sup> Her expressed motivation, to write a history of the war, may have been related to her commitment to the Confederate cause, or it may have been a more acceptable excuse for this southern woman’s choice to disguise herself as a man.

There were some distinctly female motivations for soldiering. For instance, many women desired to remain near their husbands, lovers, fathers, and/or brothers who enlisted. Loreta Janeta Velazquez wrote in her memoir:

My husband desired me to go to Galveston, and to write to my father to meet me there; but my heart was set upon accompanying him to the seat of war, and I would listen to no other arrangement. He used every possible argument to dissuade me from my purpose, representing the difficulties and dangers in the darkest colors... that a delicately nurtured and refined woman would find camp life, during such a war as that just commencing, simply intolerable. He was not to be persuaded, while I turned a deaf ear to all his remonstrances, and persisted in arguing the point with him to the last.<sup>65</sup>

Velazquez's desire to remain with her husband was not uncommon. Many newspaper reports about female soldiers indicate they followed a husband or lover into service.

In March 1864, the *Iowa Transcript* reported:

We almost daily read accounts of the valorous deeds of females who have fought in the ranks for months without their sex being divulged; but in most cases there has been connected with their history some love romance that had an important bearing upon their action.<sup>66</sup>

The perception that female soldiering was a romantic endeavor may account for why the media and the general public treated them relatively well. At the same time that female soldiers abandoned superficial gender conventions, those that followed their men into battle were reinforcing other deeper cultural ideas about gender. Following a man out of love was an extension of their subordinate role in the relationship. This may explain why, despite their abandonment of socially acceptable standards of dress and demeanor, they were received relatively well by the public at large. In June 1864 the *Alleghenian* reported the story of Elizabeth Archer stating, "The war teems with romance...It seems to be the old story, told anew, of how love is more strong

than discretion, forcing her to don the apparel of her country to follow him whom she loved to the tented field.”<sup>67</sup> That same month two other female soldiers were reported following their lovers into battle. Mary Shipple attempted to reunite with her man, who was “a Captain in a Michigan regiment” by donning a military uniform but was denied by the Provost Marshall.<sup>68</sup> Emily Ebert was caught wearing a cavalry uniform attempting to join her husband in the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Jersey cavalry.<sup>69</sup>

Many female soldiers outlived the husbands and lovers with whom they enlisted. In January 1863 the *Abingdon Virginian* reported:

Mrs. [Amy] Clark volunteered with her husband as a private, fought through the battles of Shiloh, where Mr. Clark was killed- she performing the rites of burial with her own hands. She then continued with Braggs army in Kentucky, fighting in the ranks as a common soldier, until she was twice wounded...<sup>70</sup>

In September 1863 the *Daily Gate City* reported that a female soldier had served 22 months in a Missouri cavalry regiment after enlisting with her husband who was killed.<sup>71</sup> In January 1864, Mary Jane Johnson enlisted in the 16<sup>th</sup> Maine regiment in order to accompany her lover and “shield and protect him when in danger.” Unfortunately, he was also killed in battle.<sup>72</sup> Like Amy Clark, some women continued to fight even after their husband or lover had died. There were a few reports of female soldiers who divulged their sex after the man they loved was killed.

Some women followed other male family members into battle. Joseph Davidson was discovered to be a woman after enlisting in the “Veteran Army Corps” (presumably the Veteran Reserve Corps).<sup>73</sup> Her previous discharge paperwork indicated that she had served three years in the 59<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry. In May

1864 the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* reported, “Her father had been killed by her side at Chickamauga.”<sup>74</sup> Apparently, it was this woman’s desire to remain with her father that had initially motivated her to enlist. A female soldier from Indiana served for two years with her brother before being wounded and subsequently discovered. In September 1864 she appealed to U.S. President Abraham Lincoln for back pay, which she had previously been refused. The President directed the paymaster to remit the payment to her.<sup>75</sup> Another female soldier who went by the name of Frank Henderson also followed her only living relative into service. Her brother had enlisted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, and being left all alone, she enlisted soon after to be near him.<sup>76</sup>

While many women enlisted to be with their male loved ones, others were motivated by revenge for the death of them. According to Blanton and Cook, “Women Soldiers did not...feel any need to hide their thirst for vengeance.”<sup>77</sup> Mary Smith enlisted in the 41<sup>st</sup> Ohio Infantry to avenge the death of her only brother who had been killed at the First Battle of Bull Run.<sup>78</sup> Charlotte Hope joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry but refused to enlist as a regular. Under her alias Charlie Hopper, she told a comrade that she did not want to be hired for pay for the job she wished to do, which was to “kill twenty-one Yankees.” Her mission was to avenge the death of her fiancé.<sup>79</sup>

Another distinctly female motivation to enlist was to escape the shackles of the female condition in Victorian America. According to Blanton and cook, women soldiers “enjoyed the adventure and freedom that being away from home and being in the army afforded them.”<sup>80</sup> Most women could then expect little more than a

domestic existence and certainly not adventure and money of their own. After spending years in the Union Army, Sara Rosetta Wakeman wrote to her parents: “I have enjoyed my self [*sic*] the best since I have been gone away from home than I ever did before in my life. I have had plenty of money to spend and a good time asoldier[ing] [*sic*].”<sup>81</sup> After being discovered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, Mary Cook reported that she and two of her friends were motivated by “nothing but a desire to experience a soldier’s life.”<sup>82</sup> Mary Jane G\_\_ (last name withheld due to her parents being “estimable members of society”) explained that the reason for her enlistment was ““she wanted to see the world.””<sup>83</sup>

In the early twentieth century some historians began to argue that female Civil War soldiers had been motivated to cross-dress and fight because they were sexual “perverts.” This term and the word “deviant” were often used synonymously with the term homosexual. One was labeled as such not necessarily for engaging in sexual activity with a person of the same sex, but simply for displaying character traits that were culturally prescribed to the opposite sex. Historian Margot Canaday explains, “perversion was defined primarily by gender inversion (mannishness in women and effeminacy in men) rather than by sexual behavior per se.”<sup>84</sup> Until the early twentieth century, the state (and therefore historians) had shown little concern for female homosexuality. Since women were not full citizens, “deviant” sexual behavior among them had drawn little attention in the nineteenth century. The belief that female Civil War soldiers were sexual deviants was not widespread during the war or even in the decades following it when the people who actually witnessed it were still



alive. However, a revision of the facts became popular in the early twentieth century when the power of strong women started to be seen as a real threat to patriarchal norms. This threat to the status quo resulted in an historical backlash orchestrated by those that historian Lillian Faderman said had a “vested interest in the old order.” Additionally, Canaday explains, “as women were more completely drawn into citizenship, then, state officials became more focused on lesbianism.”<sup>85</sup> Ironically, during the mid-nineteenth century, it was precisely the strict and unquestioned gender norms that allowed for a relatively positive response to women who abandoned these norms to fight in the war. There was no real threat to the social order if a few women strayed from gender conventions out of love or patriotism. But, as the decades passed and women began to make headway toward enfranchisement and full citizenship, female Civil War soldiers began to be painted with a negative historical brush by those invested in the way things had always been.<sup>86</sup>

There were undoubtedly lesbians and transgender men among the biological females who fought. After two female soldiers were discovered in the 15<sup>th</sup> Missouri Regiment, Union General Philip Sheridan wrote “An intimacy had sprung up between” them.<sup>87</sup> Although the term intimate had a different meaning in the nineteenth century (The 1828 edition of *Webster’s* dictionary defined intimate as “close familiarity or fellowship; nearness in friendship) and was often used to refer to close platonic friendships between women, Sheridan’s words might have been suggesting a lesbian relationship.

A few female soldiers were, in fact, motivated to enlist because they were living as men before the war. One such went by the name Charley Miller and refused to allow the *Rochester (NY) Democrat* to print her real name. The Cincinnati *Daily Press* recounted her story in January 1862 indicating, “Almost from childhood she has chosen to unsex herself and lead a masquerading life in male garb.”<sup>88</sup> The *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported that Lizzie Compton, was orphaned as a child and dressed in boy’s clothes to get work before the war. In a lengthy article in March 1864, the paper reported that she,

is certainly a remarkable specimen of the race to which she belongs...at the age of sixteen years she stands unsexed...resolved to be a man...has not become a boy for love of adventure- to create a sensation- or to chase a lover- nothing of the sort. She has the instincts of a boy- loves boyish pursuits and is bound to be a man.<sup>89</sup>

Curiously, this article was largely sympathetic despite the fact that Compton not only “unsexed” herself, but also desired to live as a boy. More curious still, that it seemed to be implying females were an altogether different “race” than males.

There were no newspaper articles during the war about a soldier whose given name was Jennie Hodgers. She served under the name Albert D. J. Cashier (Figure 1) and is possibly the most famous female civil war soldier. As a child, Jennie’s father dressed her as a boy to get work. Living as a man prior to the war, Albert enlisted in the Army in Illinois. He corresponded with a female who is suspected to have been his lover. He continued to live, work, and identify as a man after the war and received a veteran’s pension. Albert’s secret was accidentally revealed during a medical examination long after the war. Sadly, near the end of his life, according to

the National Park Service, Albert “was shipped to a mental institution and forced to wear female clothing....At 67 years old, frail and unaccustomed to walking in women’s clothing, she tripped and broke her hip...and spent the rest of her life bedridden.”<sup>90</sup>



Figure 1 (left): Albert D. J. Cashier from *The Harvard Independent* September 11, 1913.  
Figure 2 (right) Albert D. J. Cashier grave stone Sunny Slope Cemetery Saunemin, IL by Danni Leone-Poe April 2019.

Despite the few aforementioned soldiers who may have been in same-sex relationships or who lived their lives as men, the evidence suggests that most female soldiers were neither lesbian nor transgender. Blanton and Cook refuted this historical stereotype in *They Fought Like Demons*. The newspaper evidence also clearly refutes the assumption that large numbers of female soldiers were lesbian or transgender. In fact, a great many women followed their male lovers to war. Some endeavored to make a better life for themselves, or live out their patriotic desires. Whatever the reasoning, their cross-dressing was a pragmatic strategy to solve a problem for which there were few, if any, other options. Furthermore, female soldiers were not feminists. This is to say that they were not, by and large,

advocating for female equality. While their stories remain illustrative of the strength, courage, and determination of women (and have been invoked by women's rights advocates in generations since) there is no evidence to suggest widespread feminist sentiments among female troops.

Based upon their desire to fight, some women petitioned the military to allow them to serve openly. The Confederate secretary of war "politely declined...a group of more than twenty women," and a woman in Ohio wrote President Lincoln that she could "easily raise a regiment."<sup>91</sup> Their entreaties were, however, graciously rejected. Since their desire to fight openly fell on deaf ears, many tenacious women took the next logical step of disguise. Today it is difficult to imagine how this was possible considering that a Civil War soldier had to undergo an enlistment physical and live in close quarters with their fellow soldiers.

Civil War army recruits required examination by an army surgeon in order that their military fitness could be ascertained. Furthermore, the 1861 U.S. Army Recruiting Regulations read, "It is the duty of the recruiting officer to be present at the examination of the recruit by the medical officer (US Department of the Army Regulations of 1861, Revised, art. XL, par. 937)." There are many documented cases of females being discovered by recruiters or surgeons as they attempted to enlist. In July 1862 the *Cleveland Morning Leader* reported that a recruiter, "was about to accept the new recruit when he suddenly made the startling discovery that he- she, we mean- was a woman in disguise!"<sup>92</sup> In February 1865 the *Chicago Tribune* reported,

“A female in soldiers clothing yesterday morning made application for enlistment at one of the recruiting stations...Her sex was speedily detected.”<sup>93</sup>

Wartime newspapers, however, documented hundreds of cases of women who served disguised as men for months and even years. How were they able to get past the recruiting officers and medical personnel? One newspaper report read, “It is supposed that nearly all of these [female soldiers] were in collusion with men who were examined by the Surgeons and accepted, after which the fair ones substituted themselves and came on to the war.”<sup>94</sup> While some women likely did persuade men to stand in for them upon examination occasionally, it does not seem plausible that it was the case very often because there is not widespread notation of this strategy in wartime newspapers. Furthermore, most men who passed the enlistment examination would have actually enlisted. It is more likely that the rudimentary systems of personal identification simply made it easy for women to assume a male persona.

The enlistment physical was often conducted less thoroughly than army regulations required or it was omitted altogether because of the pressure to quickly muster troops. In fact, the medical exam conducted on Sarah Emma Edmonds, who enlisted as Private Franklin Thompson, consisted of “a firm handshake.”<sup>95</sup> The lack of medical scrutiny left the door open not only for cross-dressing women but also for underage boys and sickly men to enter the ranks.<sup>96</sup> Despite the eighteen-year age minimum in both the Union and Confederate armies, it was not unusual for younger boys to bolster the ranks. This made it more possible for women who lacked facial hair to pass as pre-pubescent males.<sup>97</sup> While it was one thing to make it past the

enlistment examination, it was entirely another to live day after day without drawing suspicion.

It seems improbable that a woman could successfully deceive hundreds of fellow troops and officers for any significant period of time. After all, the social and cultural climate allowed for no gender role latitude in the mid- nineteenth century. Men looked and acted in strictly prescribed ways, as did women. In fact, this may very well have been the reason that female soldiers could avoid detection. According to Blanton and Cook, “in the 1860s, clothing was the most potent public indication of gender.”<sup>98</sup> It was precisely the strict gender conventions that may have allowed cross-dressing women to fool so many for so long. Since most people did not know what a woman looked like in trousers, it was not easy to spot one. Generally speaking, people do not see what they are not expecting to see. Therefore, the donning of pants and the cutting of hair went much further toward one’s disguise than those tactics would in today’s society. Stephen Currie explains, “No one thought of finding a woman in a soldier’s dress.”<sup>99</sup> The armies also inadvertently aided women with their disguise by issuing ill-fitting uniforms, which made it easier for soldiers to conceal their womanly parts.

Considering the need to attend to such hygiene activities as bathing, menstruation, urination, and bowel movements, it must have been difficult for female soldiers to conceal their gender on a daily basis in an army of such close quarters. Since these topics were not customarily the subject of diary entries, memoirs, or letters written to loved ones, historians can only speculate as to how they managed

their personal hygiene needs without drawing suspicion. The Civil War soldier rarely bathed or changed clothes and, according to Blanton and Cook:

Latrines or company sinks were often long, open trenches...they were disgusting and filthy affairs...they promoted disease and sickness in camp. Women soldiers undoubtedly answered the call of nature by heading to the woods or some other private place, and this behavior probably did not arouse suspicion because so many other soldiers avoided the sinks in the same way.<sup>100</sup>

The poor sanitation in Civil War military camps clearly aided the deception. As for menstruation, “presumably women used cotton rags to swath themselves and protect their clothing. Perhaps the bloody rags were explained away as the used bindings of a minor injury.”<sup>101</sup> It is likely that most women eventually suffered from amenorrhea (the absence of menstruation) due to the physical and mental stress and malnutrition that came with soldiering and maintaining their charade.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to looking like a man, female soldiers also had to maintain traditionally male habits and mannerisms. They had to curse, fight, gamble, smoke, and drink like men. Some women probably already knew how to do these things and others had to learn them. According to the *Ottumwa Courier*, one woman who claimed to have been a soldier, “chew[ed] tobacco, besides having other peculiarities of style, manner, and expression, not generally regarded as becoming to the gentler sex.”<sup>103</sup> A newspaper story about Frances Clayton reported: “While in the army, the better to conceal her sex, she learned to drink, chew, smoke and swear with the best, or worst, of the soldiers.”<sup>104</sup> The *New York Times* reported that two female soldiers were drummed out of their company. Prior to their discovery, the article stated,

They had succeeded in transforming themselves in manner as well as attire, having exchanged all those habits which render female character attractive, for the coarseness and vulgarity which are too frequently found in the opposite sex.<sup>105</sup>

Loreta Janeta Velazquez similarly noted that as a soldier in camp,

My favorite amusement was a game of cards, and I preferred this way of entertaining myself...From my earliest recollection, however, I have had a thorough distaste for vulgarity of language and profanity, and my camp experiences only tended to increase my disgust at the blackguardism [abusive or scurrilous language] which many men are so fond of indulging in...I was compelled to sink my sex entirely, for the least inadvertence would have thwarted my plans, and prevented the realization of all I aimed at.<sup>106</sup>

The level of disgust about the behavior of male soldiers demonstrated that this native of Cuba had become a true southern lady. Despite her gender transgressions, the Staunton Virginia *Spectator* referred to her as “a devoted Southern woman.”<sup>107</sup> In addition to adopting new habits, women had to subdue any distinctly feminine habits. The inability of some women to maintain typically male behaviors, or to suppress their feminine behaviors, would sometimes result in their discovery.

Once a woman successfully enlisted, her daily life was largely the same as any other recruit. Female soldiers served in all types of regiments and were by and large very highly regarded by their male comrades. Blanton and Cook explained, “most of the women, regardless of their rank, felt a keen sense of their duty and performed admirably as soldiers.”<sup>108</sup> The honorable character of female soldier service was reflected in the high level of praise they garnered among their comrades. It was reported that the aforementioned female soldier called Frank Henderson, “won the universal esteem of her officers.”<sup>109</sup> There are many newspaper articles that allude to



the fact, or state outright, that female soldiers were thought of very highly by their male comrades both during their charade and even after being discovered. One such story about Frank Martin, reprinted from the *Louisville Journal* by the *Gallipolis Journal* in May 1863, described:

the young soldier...at once attracted the attention of Col. Mundy, as being exceedingly sprightly and possessed of more than ordinary intelligence. Being in need of such a young man at Barracks No. 1, the Colonel detailed him for service in that institution. He soon won the esteem of his superior officers and became a general favorite with all.<sup>110</sup>

Many stories like this one reported that, when in disguise, female soldiers were well liked among their comrades and performed well at their soldier duties. The article about Frank Martin continued,

A few days ago, however, the startling secret was disclosed that the supposed young man was a young lady...she begged to be retained in the position to which she was assigned....Her wish was accordingly granted and she is still at her post...during the past 10 months...she enlist[ed] in the Second East Tennessee Cavalry. She was in the thickest of the fight at Murfreesboro and was severely wounded in the shoulder, but fought gallantly...[after being discovered and mustered out of the Second East Tennessee, and reenlisting in the Eighth Michigan]....She is represented as an excellent horseman, and has been honored with the position of Regimental Bugler....She has seen and endured all the privations and hardship incident to the life of a soldier, and gained an enviable reputation as a scout, having made several wonderful expeditions which were attended with signal success.<sup>111</sup>

Henderson's discovery as a woman seems to have done little to change the opinion of her fellow soldiers.

Most female soldiers served in infantry regiments simply because the infantry was the largest corps of the army with the greatest number of soldiers. However,

there is documentary evidence indicating that women served in all types of regiments including artillery and cavalry. Richard Hall notes, "Several reports have...been found of women serving in the artillery of both armies."<sup>112</sup> In September 1864 the *Cleveland Morning Leader* reported the following information about an artillery soldier: "Something in his bearing caused suspicion of his sex, and a sharp cross-examination...discovered the fact that the pretended artillery-man was an artillery-woman."<sup>113</sup> Additionally, female soldiers were found in the cavalry ranks. Hall writes, "a surprisingly large percentage of female soldiers served in cavalry units."<sup>114</sup> This may have been the case because of the relative mobility, lack of discipline, and the mission of cavalry units to serve on the periphery of the army.<sup>115</sup> Cavalry units could, presumably, provide more cover for a female soldier's disguise since they had less oversight, were more autonomous, and did not require the same extent of close quartering as did infantry units. Their general positioning on the outskirts of or in front of an army, away from the mass of infantry soldiers, likely made it easier for women soldiers to carry on their day-to-day charade. Furthermore, the first priority of a cavalry soldier was care of his (her) horse. Female cavalry soldiers may have been spared discovery, in part, because they spent more time with their horse than with other soldiers. In February 1862, Mary Cook was discovered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Cavalry regiment. Her duty consisted of being "a servant to the Captain of her company, as he considered the 'little boy' too slender to endure the hardships of cavalry service."<sup>116</sup> Like "Frank Martin," however, other female soldiers actually served in cavalry combat. In December 1863 Lizzie Crampton was discovered in the

11<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Cavalry where she served for several months.<sup>117</sup> In April 1864, Fannie Lee of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Cavalry revealed herself after serving in a campaign on the Potomac.<sup>118</sup> Prior to her being discovered in the 21<sup>st</sup> Missouri Infantry, Jane Short served in the 6th Illinois Cavalry. “She was at the battle of Shiloh, and was there wounded in the hand by a musket ball.”<sup>119</sup> Frances F. Sigil served in the 13<sup>th</sup> Missouri Cavalry. She enlisted in 1861 with her husband. Unfortunately, “her husband was killed and she severely wounded. Her sex thus became known and she was discharged.”<sup>120</sup> Margaret Torrey enlisted in the Confederate cavalry with her husband. She served 10 months in Co. D, Jeff Davis Legion, Butler’s Cavalry Division and only made herself known after her husband was killed at Bentonville.<sup>121</sup>

Women did not only serve as enlisted soldiers. They sometimes rose to the officer ranks and led other soldiers into battle. During the Civil War, officers were still elected by the men in a regiment. Election to an officer rank was a reflection of the admiration of a soldier’s comrades. Curiously, according to the Staunton *Spectator*, Loreta Janeta Velazquez was commissioned to the rank of Captain in the Confederate army *after* her sex was known.<sup>122</sup> In its story about the capture of Mary A. Wright and Margaret Henry, the *Evansville Daily Journal* reported, “one of them rejoices in the rank and title of a captain.”<sup>123</sup> Mary Cook reported that one of her friends with whom she enlisted, “was elected Lieutenant.” The election of female soldiers into the officer ranks speaks to their competence and the high regard in which they were held by their comrades.

Some women were very persistent and enlisted many times in different regiments after being discovered and discharged from their units. In December 1863 the Wheeling West Virginia *Daily Register* ran a story from the *Louisville Dem.* about the fantastic service of Lizzie Crampton (also noted as Lizza Compton in another publication). It was reported that this sixteen-year-old from Canada was discharged seven times after her sex was discovered. Each time, she immediately re-enlisted in another regiment. She was in several battles and wounded in combat at Fredericksburg.<sup>124</sup>

Female soldiers were discovered in many different ways. Some were identified as women when their feminine mannerisms gave them away. In January 1862, the *Cincinnati Daily Press* ran a story of a female soldier named H. Bell whose “sweet silvery voice betrayed her sex.”<sup>125</sup> In December 1864 *The New York Times* reported the story of a female Confederate scout who was captured while dressed in a Union colonel uniform noting, “there was something in the person’s form, or voice, or hair, or airs...to compensate for the absence of hair necessary for a masculine disguise...to create suspicion.”<sup>126</sup>

A dead giveaway to a female soldier’s true sex was pregnancy. The 29<sup>th</sup> Colored Infantry soldier noted previously was not the only woman who gave birth while in disguise. In May 1862, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported, “a Vermont private on guard there fell sick one night and was taken to the hospital where the soldier gave birth to a child.”<sup>127</sup> In April 1863, *The Rutland Weekly Herald* reported, “A soldier in one of the Wisconsin regiments, who has been in every battle that the regiment has

been in...was taken suddenly ill the other morning; a surgeon was called, and this soldier gave birth to a child.”<sup>128</sup> In June 1863, the *Gallipolis Journal* reported the story of a corporal of a New Jersey regiment who gave birth “while on picket duty in the extreme front of our lines.”<sup>129</sup>

Some female soldiers were discovered when they were intoxicated. In October 1861 the *New York Times* noted that Hatty Robinson (elsewhere referred to as Hattie Martin) of Auburn, New York reported, “I drank about four glasses of ale at the hotel, and this I consider the cause of my arrest and discovery.”<sup>130</sup> In May 1862, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that a soldier was arrested while “...in a state of blissful intoxication.” A reporter happened to be at the jail and the paper reported,

observing that the soldier appeared to be in an unconscious state, he feared that life had become extinct, and, opening the bosom of the apparently inanimate form to see if there was any appearance of life, the reader can judge of his astonishment on finding that it was- *a woman*.”<sup>131</sup>

The disinhibition of drunkenness sometimes resulted in an unintended discovery. Other discoveries occurred during unfortunate disinhibitions of another sort.

Medical personnel often discovered female soldiers when they became ill or wounded. Hall explained, “The true gender of some apparently male soldiers or enlistees came to light when they were unable to fool a nurse or a physician who interviewed them, by accidentally displaying ‘female mannerisms.’”<sup>132</sup> In December 1861 the *Cincinnati Daily Press* reported that a female soldier was discovered because she “had been endeavoring to procure opium at some of the drug-stores. It

was owing to her illness, no doubt, that her sex was discovered, for she was moaning piteously, and showed every symptom of her womanly nature.”<sup>133</sup> Mary E. Wise “was in numerous engagements...and had been wounded three times, the last, at Lookout Mountain by a ball in the shoulder. She was then dressed in male attire, and was conveyed from the field to the hospital. On the Surgeon coming round [*sic*] to dress her wound her sex was discovered.”<sup>134</sup> In September 1863 the *Gallipolis Journal* reported,

On Thursday last one of the soldiers at Camp Dennison was taken before Dr. M.T. Cary, Post Surgeon for medical treatment. From certain characteristics of her disease, the physician was led to belief that the individual was a female in disguise. Upon being questioned, she frankly acknowledged to the fact.<sup>135</sup>

The following month the *North Branch Democrat* reported an unidentified female soldier was discovered by a nurse in a Pennsylvania hospital while undergoing treatment for “a severe attack of typhoid fever.”<sup>136</sup>

Other women disclosed their gender with their dying words or were discovered after death, by those attending to their corpse. In her memoir Sarah Emma Edmonds, alias Franklin Thompson recounted that while walking the field looking for wounded after the Battle of Antietam, she came upon a young soldier who was badly injured in the neck. The soldier, who was dying, confessed “his” true identity as a female to Edmonds. “The soldier said that she had enlisted with her brother and that they were orphans. She had witnessed his death earlier that day...She asked Edmonds to bury her, so that no one would ever know her secret.”<sup>137</sup> Edmonds remained with the soldier until she died and, “With the help of two unwitting soldiers,

[she] buried her, wrapped in a blanket, under a tree.”<sup>138</sup> In March 1864, the *Big Blue Union* reprinted a story from the *Detroit Advertiser* which noted that a female soldier was discovered after being mortally wounded by a Minie ball during the battle of Lookout Mountain:

the Colonel of the regiment...prevailed upon her to let him send a dispatch to her father. This she dictated in the following manner: Mr.\_, No.\_, Willoughby street, Brooklyn. Forgive your dying daughter. I have but a few moments to live. My native soil drinks my blood. I expected to deliver my country, but the fates would not have it so. I am content to die. Pray, Pa, forgive me. Tell Ma to kiss my daguerreotype [photograph]. EMILY. P.S. Give my gold watch to little Eph. (The youngest brother of the dying girl.) The poor girl was buried on the field on which she fell.<sup>139</sup>

As it was with many female soldiers, Emily was likely estranged from her family after she enlisted as a man. Her dying words beseeching her father to forgive her are heart-wrenching.

In June 1865, more than two years after the fighting ceased in Sharpsburg Maryland, the *Daily National Republican* reported, “Mr. Good [*sic*], who is actively engaged collecting a list of names of the dead on Antietam battle field...has discovered that a woman acting as a Union soldier in uniform was killed in that great battle.”<sup>140</sup> This article refers to Aaron Goode, a patriotic citizen of Sharpsburg, Maryland who assisted the Antietam National Cemetery Commission by identifying and annotating as many of the dead as he could.<sup>141</sup> Like so many thousands of others, the female body found at Antietam was likely buried as an unknown soldier in the cemetery. Finally, it was reported that Frank Martin, “assisted in burying three female soldiers at different times, whose sex was unknown to anyone but herself.”<sup>142</sup> For one female

soldier to find three others dead on the battlefield begs the question how many other female bodies were found by other soldiers who never divulged the fact?

Instead of being discovered after death, some women attempted, or succeeded at, suicide after being discovered. According to Blanton and Cook, “A woman soldier called Charlie actually succeeded in killing herself when faced with expulsion from her regiment.”<sup>143</sup> In her memoir, Mary Livermore recalled an incident, during her time with the Sanitary Commission, of a distraught female soldier:

One of the captains came to me, with an apology for intrusion, and begged to know if I noticed anything peculiar in the appearance of one of the men...It was evident at a glance that the “man” was a young woman in male attire, and I said so. “That is the rumor, and that is my suspicion,” was his reply. The seeming soldier was called from the ranks and informed of the suspicions afloat, and asked the truth of them. There was a scene in an instant. Clutching the officer by the arm, and speaking in tones of passionate entreaty, she begged him not to expose her, but to allow her to retain her disguise. Her husband had enlisted in his company, she said and it would kill her if he marched without her. “Let me go with you!” I heard her plead. “Oh, sir, let me go with you!” ...I took her in charge...but she leaped suddenly from the carriage...and in a moment was lost amid the crowds...That night she leaped into the Chicago river, but was rescued by a policeman.<sup>144</sup>

Livermore caught up with this unnamed woman again at the “Home of the Friendless” and her last notation about the incident was that the husband’s regiment was ordered to Cairo (Illinois) and that the “poor woman disappeared from the Home the same night.”<sup>145</sup> It is perhaps a coincidence or perhaps the final chapter of this same woman’s story, that in April 1863, under the title “From Cairo,” the *Chicago Tribune* reported, “A young woman wearing soldier’s apparel, and belonging to the 14<sup>th</sup> Iowa, shot herself last night because her secret was discovered.”<sup>146</sup> There is not



enough information from either Livermore's memoir or the *Chicago Tribune* article to determine if the two women were one in the same person.

Like their male counterparts, some female soldiers became prisoners of war. Stockade personnel sometimes discovered their sex during incarceration. According to the *Abingdon Virginian*, Amy Clark "fell a prisoner into the hands of the Yankees. Her sex was discovered by the Federals, and she was regularly paroled as a prisoner of war."<sup>147</sup> In February 1864, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on the deplorable conditions under which Union soldiers were being held in the Belle Isle Prison in Virginia. "A female federal soldier was lately discovered among them."<sup>148</sup> A few months later the *New York Times* reported the story of Frances E. Hook (who was also known as Frank Henderson Figure 3) indicating that she,

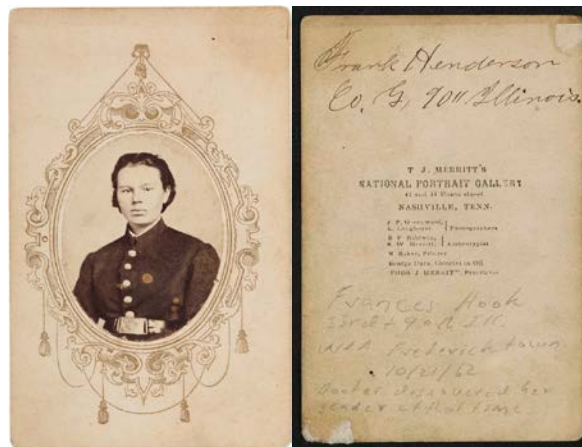


Figure 3: Frances Hook, a.k.a. Frank Henderson front and back from the Library of Congress.

was captured...while foraging with a small party, and on attempting two or three days after to escape from her escort, who were preparing to cross the Tennessee River with several prisoners, she was fired at and struck in the calf of the leg. Though no more than a flesh wound, it was painful, and in this condition she was obliged to march several miles handcuffed and even shackled.<sup>149</sup>

In addition to the daily horrors of war, female prisoners like Hook also endured torture and the even more unsanitary conditions of the stockade.

Many, if not most, female soldiers continued their deception as prisoners of war even though they likely would have been paroled had they divulged their true sex. Mary Jane Johnson who had followed her lover into the Army was also discovered in Belle Isle Prison, “disguised, among the prisoners of war held there...and had been a prisoner some time.”<sup>150</sup> In October 1865, Colonel J.P.S. Tobin, 47<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania veteran volunteers wrote a letter to the *Philadelphia Press*, which read as follows:

SIR: During a recent visit to the stockade at Florence in this State; found the grave of a female from your city. Upon inquiry I learned she was brought there with a number of other prisoners, but her sex was not discovered until shortly before her death. She stated her name to be Florina Budworth, and that she had resided in Philadelphia. I could not learn to what regiment she had belonged. She is buried among the other victims of rebel cruelty and starvation. Thinking perhaps she may have some friends in the city, I take the liberty of forwarding this.<sup>151</sup>

According to Hall, Budwin (noted as Budworth by the *Philadelphia Press*) was captured “while serving in male disguise along with her husband, a Pennsylvania artillery captain.”<sup>152</sup> She continued her deception even after her husband was killed by a prison guard. She eventually succumbed to pneumonia one month before all of the sick prisoners at Florence stockade were paroled.<sup>153</sup> She was buried at the Florence National Cemetery in South Carolina.

Some female soldiers elected to divulge their sex after their male loved ones were killed or wounded. Still others turned themselves in because they had

experienced enough of the war. In May 1862 the *Chicago Tribune* reported about a female soldier who “became tired of the drudgery she was called on to perform, and made known her sex.”<sup>154</sup> Fannie Lee, it was reported, “announced herself disgusted with the life of a trooper and changing her costume for one more befitting her sex, returned home.”<sup>155</sup>

Despite all of the stories of female soldiers who were found out, one can speculate that many more were never discovered. It is clear that women who chose this path did not make the decision lightly and, therefore, did not divulge it willingly in most cases. Many secrets likely died with these soldiers either during the war or later on in life.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Stories of Female Soldiers in the Press**

The female soldiers, discovered in the disguise of regular uniform, are said to be good fighters... the women who wear the breeches always were.

— “The Soldier’s Journal,” 17 February 1864

Military or civilian authorities detained most female soldiers when they were discovered. Therefore, newspaper articles about them usually began by discussing the arrest. In October 1861, according to the *Tipton Advisor*, the Federal police were summoned on suspicion that a soldier was a woman. “They saw her and concluded to

arrest her, as there could be no doubt that a female had assumed the garb of a soldier.”<sup>156</sup> In some cases, the report of the arrest of a female soldier was essentially the entire article. In February 1863, the *Alexandria Gazette* simply stated, “A female dressed in soldier’s clothes was arrested in Washington, yesterday. She is from Camden, N.J., and has served as a private in the army for three months.”<sup>157</sup> In May 1865, the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* reported, “A girl in the uniform of the United States army was arrested in Cincinnati on Sunday night, on a charge of vagrancy. She called herself Sophia Thompson.”<sup>158</sup> The incarceration of a female soldier was generally brief and they were usually sent home without being charged. According to the *Cincinnati Daily Press*, a police officer “arrested a female yesterday who was dressed in a soldier’s uniform.” This woman, known as Harry Fitzallen stood before a judge who “let her go on promise to don her proper habiliments.”<sup>159</sup> The practice of quickly releasing arrested female soldiers was likely the result of positive public sentiment spilling over into the judicial system. Some females in disguise were not released right away simply because they had no clothing befitting their gender. In March 1864, the *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported that a female soldier had been arrested and the authorities were “perplexed to know what to do with her [because they] have no clothes to give her and city ordinances prohibit the female sex from perambulating the streets in male attire.”<sup>160</sup>

While contemporary accounts of the Civil War rarely acknowledge the fact that women took up arms, the discovery of female soldiers was quite common during the war years. Newspapers were responsible for making this fact common

knowledge. Blanton and Cook argue that copious newspaper coverage contributed to “the widespread wartime public knowledge of women serving in the ranks.”<sup>161</sup> Many newspaper articles referred to the frequency with which female soldiers were discovered in the ranks. In October 1863, the *Gallipolis Journal* commented, “We read in the papers frequently of female soldiers.”<sup>162</sup> In April 1864, *The New York Times* reported, “Several instances of females enlisting as soldiers and performing service in the ranks, since the rebellion began, have been given in the public prints.”<sup>163</sup> According to the *Alleghenian*, in June 1864, “This war has furnished many instances both in the rebel and Federal army, of females entering the service as soldiers.”<sup>164</sup> That same month the *Aegis & Intelligencer* reported, “official records of the military authorities in [Washington] show that upwards of one hundred and fifty female recruits have been discovered and made to resume the garments of their sex.”<sup>165</sup> That number, ostensibly, only included Union soldiers and most definitely only included those female soldiers who had been discovered.

Newspaper articles of female soldiers were so common, in fact, that writers sometimes acknowledged their stories were no longer newsworthy. In December 1863, the *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported “Soldiers of the female ‘persuasion,’ have become so common as to excite but little curiosity.”<sup>166</sup> A month later the paper exclaimed that “The appearance of the ‘female soldier’ in our exchanges is even more regular and frequent than that of the pious youth whose bible stopped so many rebel bullets.”<sup>167</sup> While newspapers often reference the pocket bibles issued to Civil War soldiers they rarely told tales of the book actually stopping bullets. But the

hyperbolic comment illustrated the fact that stories about female soldiers were very common during the war. After three long years of war, *The Daily Ohio Statesman* ran a story that began with the following comment:

The idea of feminine soldiers may have been good enough in days gone by to constitute the foundation for romance; but this “gruel war” has developed so many heroines of that kind that they have ceased to be regarded as novelties.<sup>168</sup>

The author of this article likened the war to gruel, the disgusting slop fed to prisoners. The romantic notion of female soldiers had worn off as the conflict wore on and the papers began to reflect this.

Many newspaper articles were very brief, sometimes just a single sentence, and provided very little information. This makes it difficult to cross match stories and to weed out duplicates, making the enumeration of discovered female soldiers all that much harder. It is impossible to arrive at a definitive number of female soldiers who were discovered, to say nothing of all of those who remain undiscovered. Many newspaper stories did not even report the actual or alias names of female soldiers. Some explained that they withheld the soldier’s real name out of respect for her wishes. The aforementioned *Cincinnati Daily Press* article about Charley Miller read, “Her real name we do not think proper to mention, as she disclosed it under the promise that it should not be published.”<sup>169</sup> Some female soldiers simply refused to give their real name. Of the esteemed Frank Martin, it was reported, “We pressed (we should say urged,) her for her real name, but she very respectfully declined giving it.”<sup>170</sup> There are many articles that do not give either the real or assumed name of the female soldier and do not provide any reasoning for the choice. The Richmond

Virginia *Daily Dispatch* reported of an unnamed “female physician... in bloomer costume, trimmed in same style as the rest of the soldiers...said to be as well drilled as any man in the company.”<sup>171</sup> In August 1861, the *Cleveland Morning Leader* ran the story of an unnamed female soldier who was said to be, “a good soldier and an excellent scout, and preserved the secret of her sex until about a week ago.”<sup>172</sup> Some unnamed mentions of female soldiers were simply single sentences buried within the volumes of words on a newspaper’s page. In November 1862 the *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported simply, “A woman dressed in soldier’s clothes, an old offender in that way, having been arrested, was yesterday sent to the County Infirmary.”<sup>173</sup> According to a one-line article in the *Daily Register* in April 1864, “A woman in soldier’s clothes and moustache of her own raising has turned up in Wisconsin.”<sup>174</sup>

Many newspaper articles portrayed female soldiers in positive terms. They focused on the patriotism and valor of the women and their amazing, albeit surprising, exploits. They were often referred to as heroines. The story of Sophia Thompson and another female soldier in the *Santa Fe Weekly* reported, “the history of the motives that induced those heroines to enlist...would doubtless prove quite interesting.”<sup>175</sup> Positive press coverage was the motivation for at least one woman to enlist. In March 1864, according the *Daily Ohio Statesman*, “She had read numerous stories in the ‘loyal’ newspapers about patriotic young ladies who had donned the uniform, gone to the big wars and become greatly distinguished for their gallantry, heroism, etc., and she thought she would try the experiment.”<sup>176</sup>

A great many articles were very short and matter-of-fact, simply reporting that a female soldier had been discovered. For example, in September 1861, an article in the *National Republican* simply reported:

A female soldier was lately discovered in Capt. Kuhn's company, in camp Curtin...She is a handsome, plump maiden of only sixteen and was so thoroughly disguised that she passed inspection, and performed all the duties of a soldier, without suspicion. She was on guard when her father came to search for her.<sup>177</sup>

This, perhaps, is an example of why some, if not most, female soldiers severed ties with their family when they enlisted. In February 1865, the *Chicago Tribune* reported, "A female in soldiers clothing yesterday morning made application for enlistment at one of the recruiting stations in the Court House Square. Her sex was speedily detected. She had served one-year with honor in a Wisconsin regiment." A great number of articles were, like these, very succinct and non-judgmental. They did not express adulation or condemnation. They simply stated the fact that a woman was discovered in the ranks. The lack of hostility however, considering the clear gender lines that had been crossed, might be interpreted as tacit approval.

It was very rare for a newspaper article to take a negative tone toward a female soldier. However, as the years passed, and the phenomenon was no longer novel, there is evidence of a more cynical tone in some articles. The report of Fannie Lee in the *Daily Ohio Statesman* concluded, "The fair sex have thus far proved failures as soldiers, and it is hoped the fact has become well enough known to prevent such unpleasant discoveries in the future."<sup>178</sup> Some of the more unflattering articles tended to be those written about soldiers fighting for the opposite side of the



newspaper's allegiance. According to Blanton and Cook, "Some negative reporting...was the result of partisan sentiments....The *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle*, which zealously cheered the exploits of Union women soldiers, informed its readers in 1864 that Confederate Ida Ellison was violent and suicidal."<sup>179</sup> Despite some negative press, it was rare that a newspaper expressed overtly hostile rhetoric toward the idea of female soldiers.

Newspaper articles often represent the values or ethos of a culture better than actual factual events. This was the case with wartime coverage of female Civil War soldiers. For instance, while almost all articles about female soldiers reminded the reader that these women did not wear the clothing expected of their gender, Confederate newspapers also highlighted the womanliness of the soldiers and reported heavily on their feminine and culturally admirable attributes. For example, in its description of the soldier called Arnold, the *Wilmington Journal* (North Carolina) reported, "she appears to be a woman of intelligence and gentle breeding. She gave the names of respectable houses...who knew her in her proper sphere, when she resided in Arkansas, where she says she owns a plantation."<sup>180</sup> Articles like this, in southern newspapers, went to great lengths to excuse a female soldier's gender transgressions. Others, however, were not so subtle when it came to condemning female soldiers for their role experimentation and reminding the reading public about culturally acceptable gender norms. In January 1865, the *Wilmington Journal* printed,

when she unsexes herself, encases her feet in boots, her limbs in pantaloons, her body in a martial cloak, with a pistol swung to her

side, she becomes a he-woman and is a monstrosity. Such women by the law of nature- the true book etiquette- and by their associations, lose all modesty, self-respect, and frequently honor.<sup>181</sup>

The hostility in this article might reveal southern public sentiment near the end of the war when the Confederacy's loss had become inevitable. Not only was the South about to lose the war but also, presumably, their entire culture and way of life.

Perhaps the venomous words of this author reflected Southern fears of the latter. This level of vitriol was rare in newspaper articles about female soldiers. Regardless of the allegiance and gender biases reflected in some newspaper stories, the press in the North and South generally portrayed female soldiers as romantic, albeit confounding, figures.

Many of the most sensational, sentimental, and patriotic stories were reprinted in multiple newspapers across the country. This was perhaps a reflection of the public appetite for tales of romance, adventure, and oddity. For example, the article about the soldier in the Wisconsin regiment who gave birth was reprinted word-for-word in several papers, including *The Rutland Weekly Herald* in Vermont, the *Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph* in Ohio and the *Caledonian* in Vermont, just to name a few.<sup>182</sup> The story of Emily from Brooklyn NY, who wrote a letter to her father in her dying moments, was also reprinted many times. Papers from Kansas to Pennsylvania, from Iowa to Ohio, from Maryland to Maine, and the District of Columbia ran the story.<sup>183</sup> In fact, her story continued to be told decades after the war. According to Blanton and Cook, "Emily's story was the perfect meld of patriotism and Victorian sentimentalism, accounting for its longevity."<sup>184</sup> Lizzie Compton's story was another

told many times in different papers throughout 1863 and 1864. The native of Canada reportedly served in at least seven different regiments. Most of the articles mentioned this but none list all of the regiments. In January 1864 the *Muscatine Weekly Journal* reported, “She has been discovered and mustered out...seven or eight times.” but only specifies that she was part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Kentucky cavalry.<sup>185</sup> The *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported that Lizzie was, “in seven or eight regiments” but only listed the “79<sup>th</sup> New York, 8<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> Michigan, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota.”<sup>186</sup> Newspapers often made references to Lizzie’s youth and beauty. The *Muscatine Weekly Journal* reported she was a, “pretty young lady of some sixteen summers...”<sup>187</sup> The *Daily Register* called her Lizzie Crampton and described her as “a beautiful buxom girl of sweet sixteen.”<sup>188</sup> This may have contributed to the widespread coverage of her story.

Newspaper publishers were in business to make a profit. This begs a hard to answer question: were some of the more astounding or heart-wrenching stories embellished or fabricated in order to sell papers? The story of Pauline Cushman, embellished or not, was reprinted many times because of its high adventure and the notoriety of its subject. Cushman sometimes wore men’s clothing during her exploits as a spy for the Union army and was often portrayed in drawings and photographs wearing a Union soldier uniform (Figures 4 and 5). In May 1864 the *New York Times* reprinted an article about Cushman, that was attributed to the *Detroit Tribune*. The very lengthy and detailed article entitled *A Thrilling Narrative* reported in part:

Among the women of America who have made themselves famous since the opening of the rebellion, few have suffered more or rendered

more service to the Federal cause than Miss Maj. Pauline Cushman, the female scout and spy. At the commencement of hostilities she resided in Cleveland, Ohio, and was quite well known as a clever actress...she incurred the suspicion of being a rebel, and was arrested by the Federal authorities....In order to test the love for the old flag, she was asked if she would enter the secret service of the Government...and was at once employed to carry letters between Louisville and Nashville....She was twice suspected of being a spy, and taken prisoner, but managed to escape...a secesh woman stole her gaiters [garments worn over the shoe and lower pant leg], under the inner sole of which were found important documents which clearly proved her to be a spy. She was tried and condemned to be executed...but being sick, her execution was postponed...she received...assurance that [Gen. Bragg] should make an example of her, and that he should hang her as soon as she got well enough to be hung decently.<sup>189</sup>



Figure 4 (left): Rendering of Pauline Cushman from *The Washington Times* October 21, 1894. Figure 5 (right): Actress and Union spy Pauline Cushman in uniform with sword from the Library of Congress.

Shortly before her scheduled execution, the Union army captured the town where Cushman was being held and “the heroine of this tale was, to her great joy,

released.”<sup>190</sup> Whether or not the article embellished Cushman’s story, it is clear that it received national circulation because it was filled with heroic adventure and suspense.

The escapades of Frances Clayton (Figures 6 and 7) were a staple in the newspapers in 1863 and 1864. Historians regard her story as factually suspect. However, it is illustrative of the media sensation that some female soldiers could attract. Articles about Clayton were not only reprinted in multiple papers, but reporters sought her out for new material. The story reported in the *Highland Weekly News* in October 1863, entails her enlistment as a private posing as her husband’s brother. Clayton’s husband was subsequently killed right in front of her at the battle of Stone River. She was also injured and her sex was discovered while in the hospital. The article described Frances as “a very tall, masculine looking woman”<sup>191</sup> In July 1864, the *Daily Intelligencer* reported in a less kindly manner that “the most critical observer would be likely to take her for a man, even when dressed [*sic*] in woman’s clothing....She is tall, square-shouldered, flat-breasted, muscular, and has the most unfeminine walk possible.”<sup>192</sup> According to this same article, “we learn that she tells about the same old story, with perhaps a few slight embellishments [*sic*].”<sup>193</sup>



Figure 6 (left): Frances Clayton from Library of Congress.  
 Figure 7 (right): Frances Clayton in cavalry uniform from Library of Congress.

In October 1864, the *Portland Daily Press* reported the following new information, “she killed a rebel captain, cutting his head off with her sabre.”<sup>194</sup> In December 1864 the *Charles City Intelligencer* reported that after her discharge “she walked ninety three miles, from Lexington to Louisville, bareheaded and barefooted, tracking her way in blood.”<sup>195</sup> It is difficult to tell how much of Clayton’s story is factual and which embellishments were made by the papers and which she made. The evolution of her oft-repeated story, however, illustrated the popularity of the most sensational stories about female soldiers.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusions

The history of every place is more complicated than the people who live there like to believe. And every moment in history is just as complex as the moment we're living in right now.

– John Biewen, “This American Life”

Vast numbers of women enlisted to fight in the Civil War, despite the fact that Victorian era gender norms meant that they faced possible arrest simply for dressing like men, not to mention doing so while impersonating a soldier. Women could not legally serve in the North or South, so they chose to do so surreptitiously as men. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of articles about female soldiers appeared in newspapers across the country during the war years. Many of these stories had a very positive spin, highlighting the soldier's strength and valor. Arguably, however, in a society that devalued women generally, newspaper usage of the feminized word “heroine” versus the masculine word “hero” automatically denoted a lesser hierarchical standing.

Still other newspaper stories had a neutral tone and simply reported the facts of the female soldier's discovery. Some were more ambivalent expressing the soldier's courage while at the same time calling attention to the gender role norms that had been broken. Very few articles expressed a negative tone toward the female soldier, and those that did were often biased by their allegiance. The degree of negativity expressed by an article was often influenced by local and regional gender role norms. Few articles portrayed female soldiers pejoratively or expressed

downright disdain for the subject. Despite all of the gender normative cultural boundaries that female soldiers crossed, they were generally well regarded by the press and the general public. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that so many of them were following lovers. This devotion may have been perceived as subordination to men, which likely would have tempered the public ire these unconventional women might otherwise have elicited. Certainly, their patriotism and valor also went a long way toward moderating public disdain.

It is almost certain that there were many more African American female Civil War soldiers than have been documented. Since the Confederacy did not have black regiments, it is not surprising that there are no documented cases of black Confederate female soldiers. However black women, like black men, had a strong motive to support the Union. It is probable that the per capita percentage of black female soldiers was lower because there were fewer black regiments than there were white regiments. However this alone cannot possibly account for the utter lack of documented cases. Black female soldiers, like their white female counterparts were less likely than men to record their own wartime stories. African American women certainly had an even lower literacy rate than white women. For this reason, it is not surprising that there are few first-person accounts. There were also fewer stories of black female soldiers in the papers. Blanton and Cook wrote: “black troops received minimal attention from their contemporaries and were not celebrated by the media like their white compatriots.”<sup>196</sup> Nearly every facet of life in the North as well as the South remained incredibly racialized in the mid-nineteenth century and there is no



reason to believe that the media's handling of the stories of female soldiers was any different. That being said, the reason for the negligible number of newspaper articles about them remains largely speculative. Perhaps black female soldiers were better at staving off detection. Perhaps black women enlisted at a lower rate in black regiments than white women did in white regiments. If these things are true, the reasons for them are unknown. My research has raised more questions than it has answered on the subject of black female soldiers. It is likely that there was an element of cultural bias, and possibly a general perception of a lack of newsworthiness, which resulted in the failure of papers to cover their stories. It is very unlikely, however, that there were as few black female soldiers as the lack of documentation would suggest. The omission of appreciable numbers of black female soldiers from the historical record contributes to the assertion that the number of all female soldiers has been woefully underestimated.

Despite the speculations of scholars like Blanton, Cook, and Hall that the estimate of female Civil War soldiers should be higher, the number 400 still lives and breathes today in the realm of popular culture. Reputable internet sources like *Smithsonian.com* consistently report that "it is estimated that somewhere around 400 women disguised themselves as men and went to war, sometimes without anyone ever discovering their true identities."<sup>197</sup> This statement seems to imply that even those who were not discovered are considered in the estimate. Even sites specifically meant to educate on the subject use the outdated estimate of 400. The *Teaching with the Library of Congress* blog, a site meant to use the primary sources available at the

Library of Congress as teaching tools, reports, “approximately 400 [women] posed as male soldiers.”<sup>198</sup> The *American Battlefield Trust* website includes the statement, “Although the inherently clandestine nature of the activity makes an accurate count impossible, conservative estimates of female soldiers in the Civil War puts the number somewhere between 400 and 750.”<sup>199</sup> While most of those who have referenced the estimate at least acknowledged that it should probably be higher, few have speculated on how much higher it should actually be. It is hard to blame historians since it is precisely the secret nature of the phenomenon that makes it impossible to know how many women disguised themselves. If they were successful in their ruse, their secret died with them.

The evidence clearly suggests that the estimate of the total number of female soldiers who fought in the Civil War should be in the thousands. It is regarding this argument that I diverge, somewhat, from the scholarship of Blanton and Cook. In *They Fought Like Demons* the authors wrote, “extant documentation suggests they only numbered in the hundreds.”<sup>200</sup> My argument is fueled precisely by the voluminous amount of extant documentation coupled with the likelihood that there was much documentation that has not survived, or is yet to be discovered.

Other less tangible information when coupled with the documentary evidence bolsters the argument that many more female soldiers existed than have been estimated in the historiography of the subject. For instance, many female soldiers reported that they knew of others in their units. Mary Cook’s two unnamed friends were not the only

other female soldiers that were known to be still serving in the ranks after one of them had been discovered. For example, in July 1864 the *Weekly Intelligencer* reported that a female Union soldier “declares positively that there are five more of the same stamp, as privates in the ranks of the 101<sup>st</sup>.”<sup>201</sup> Those countless unnamed others may or may not have ever been discovered.

Due to a general decreased literacy rate, female soldiers, who may have otherwise been inclined, were unable to leave their own written records of their existence. Furthermore, there were probably many more female soldiers documented in newspapers that no longer exist or have yet to be researched. The hundreds of newspaper articles about female soldiers used in this essay are drawn primarily from one database, *Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers*. There were likely many more articles published in Civil War newspapers that have been lost to time.<sup>202</sup> The search terms used to find the articles for this project were “woman soldier” and “female soldier.” Many more articles might turn up using other terms like “girl soldier, lady soldier,” or any number of other combinations.

The number of Confederate women who disguised themselves as men and fought in combat was likely comparable to that of Union women. However, the numbers of documented Confederate female soldiers are significantly fewer than those in the Union. This might have been due to a difference in cultural values in the South, which discouraged the media, or the female soldiers themselves, from reporting their stories.

All categories of female civil war soldiers have been underestimated because of the difficulties quantifying a phenomenon that, by its very nature, was a clandestine operation. There were simply many female soldiers who were never discovered. Others were likely discovered and their secret was kept by those who found them. All of these arguments point to the probability that the number of women soldiers was in the thousands rather than in the hundreds. For these same reasons, it is not likely at all that a true number will ever be ascertained.

Public knowledge of female Civil War soldiers on both sides of the conflict was widespread during the war years. With all of the press coverage it is hard to believe that many people would have been ignorant of the fact that high numbers of women disguised themselves as men and fought during the war. Many newspaper columnists regarded female soldiers with empathy and admiration. Others simply reported the facts. Few expressed hostility toward the idea of women in the ranks. This is likely due, in part, to the fact that gender expectations were so strict that there was no real danger that female soldiers would pose a substantial risk to the cultural order. Since newspapers usually reflect and/or create public sentiment it stands to reason that the general public had either a high opinion of, or were ambivalent about, women soldiers. The reverence or, at the very least, passive acceptance of them during the war years begs one to wonder why their valorous contributions did not translate into sustained propulsion toward gender equality. Instead, the memory of these soldiers faded from the public consciousness. Over time, in a perfect example of the Orwellian tenant ““Who controls the past... controls the future: who controls

the present controls the past,” a whitewashed two-dimensional portrait of the Civil War was created.<sup>203</sup> Those in power constructed a history that supported a patriarchal national narrative and dispensed with the historical facts that contradicted it. Time, ulterior motives, and societal disinterest conspired to flatten out this complex point in history making it seem one-dimensional by removing most traces of female soldiers. Very soon after the war ended there was evidence of the willful erasure of their story from historical memory. In 1881, renowned women’s rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage published the *History of Woman Suffrage. Vol. II* in which they wrote, “Historians have made no mention of woman’s services in the war; scarcely referring to the vast number commissioned in the army, whose sex was discovered through some terrible wound, or by their dead bodies on the battle-field.”<sup>204</sup> Despite the suffragists’ attempt to rekindle the story, it continued to fade out of popular memory. A turning point occurred in the early twentieth century when women began to pose a real threat to the patriarchal order. Scholars revised the history of the female Civil War soldiers, painting them as mentally ill masculine women unworthy of remembrance. Their stories faded away, ironically, as women gained rights that were unheard of in their time. A collective historical amnesia ensued as generation after generation learned less and less about the valiant female soldiers. Today, the Civil War is still framed in overwhelmingly masculine terms, and there is little mention of the contributions of women in general, to say nothing of the female soldiers. Most people remain shocked when they learn that women fought in the war.

The erasure of women's history, including that of the valiant contributions of female soldiers, has conveniently contributed to the stunting of progress toward gender equality in the United States. It was more than a half-century after the war that women finally received the right to vote and in 2013, nearly a century and a half after the last woman fought on a Civil War battlefield, the Army finally removed the ban on women serving in combat positions.

It is clear that all of the women who fought as soldiers in the Civil War overcame the greatest of odds and risked their very lives in pursuit of their goals. They gave up lives of relative safety and security and took on a responsibility that was not expected of them. Their contributions were largely selfless and anonymous. These courageous women were the epitome of true heroism and they are a part of Civil War history that should not be forgotten...again.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Mary A. Livermore. *My Story of the War: A Woman's Narrative or Four Years Personal Experience as Nurse in the Union Army, and in Relief Work at Home, In Hospitals, camps, and at the Front, During the War of the Rebellion With Anecdotes, Pathetic Incidents, and Thrilling Reminiscences* (Hartford: A.D. Worthington and Company, 1890), 119-120.

Livermore's pronouncement that this estimate had been made (by someone else) has been referenced by other authors including DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook in *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002) and William N. Eskridge and Nan D. Hunter in *Sexuality, Gender, and the Law 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* (Foundation Press, 2004), 990. The number four hundred has endured as the estimate of female Civil War soldiers with each author speculating that there were likely more. Livermore wrote of her own suspicion that more than four hundred women disguised themselves. She did not go so far as to annotate why she believed this, nor did she speculate on a more accurate number. It is clear that Livermore was referring only to female soldiers known to the Union Army.

<sup>2</sup> Lori D. Ginzberg, *Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman's Rights in Antebellum New York*. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 46.

<sup>4</sup> George Fitzhugh. *Sociology for the South: or, The Failure of Free Society*. ([s.l: s.n.], 1854), 231.

<sup>5</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz. *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Clinton, 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Anderson Intelligencer*. (Anderson Court House, S.C.), 23 Nov. 1865.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzhugh, *Sociology*, 215.

<sup>9</sup> Kyle N. Osborn. "Their Norths: Antebellum Southern Travelers and Sectional Identity." *Southern Cultures*, (vol. 21 no. 4, 2015), 105.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Comet*. (Baton Rouge, La.), 21 March 1854.

<sup>11</sup> "Vigilantes of Montana." *The Montana post*. (Virginia City, Montana Territory [i.e. Mont.]), 14 Oct. 1865.

<sup>12</sup> *Georgetown Weekly News*. (Georgetown, El Dorado County, Cal.), 28 Dec. 1854.

<sup>13</sup> *Port Tobacco Times, and Charles County advertiser*. (Port Tobacco, Md.), 05 June 1856.

<sup>14</sup> *Weekly Comet*. (Baton Rouge, La.), 28 Oct. 1855.

<sup>15</sup> *Weekly Trinity Journal*. (Weaverville, Calif.), 18 July 1863.

<sup>16</sup> Clinton, 149.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> "A French Opera Ball." *Polynesian*. (Honolulu [Oahu], Hawaii), 23 May 1857.

<sup>19</sup> William N. Eskridge Jr. and Nan D. Hunter. *Sexuality, Gender, and the Law 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* (New York: Foundation Press, 2004), 54.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Clare Sears. *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 42.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond [Va.]), 24 March 1853.

"Again in Breeches." *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*. (Wheeling, Va. [W. Va.]), 03 Dec. 1852.

<sup>24</sup> "Again in Breeches." *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*. 03 Dec. 1852.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>26</sup> "The Police vs. Emma Snodgrass, Again." *Nashville Union*. (Nashville [Tenn.]), 08 January 1853.

<sup>27</sup> *Evansville Daily Journal*. (Evansville, Ia. [i.e. Ind.]), 10 January 1853.

<sup>28</sup> *Daily Evening Star*. (Washington [D.C.]), 28 May 1853.

<sup>29</sup> *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*. (Wheeling, Va. [W. Va.]), 08 January 1853.

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- <sup>30</sup> Clinton, 72.
- <sup>31</sup> Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds. *History of Woman Suffrage*. Vol. I. (Washington, DC: Entered, According to Act of Congress In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, 1881), 822-823, 827, 836-837.
- <sup>32</sup> Clinton, 148-9.
- <sup>33</sup> "Laundress-Historic Background." National Parks Service.
- <sup>34</sup> *Daily National Republican*. (Washington, D.C.), 07 Oct. 1863.
- <sup>35</sup> *Weekly North Iowa Times*. (McGregor, Iowa), 25 Jan. 1865.
- <sup>36</sup> *National Republican*. (Washington, D.C.), 07 Aug. 1861.
- <sup>37</sup> "U.S. Sanitary Commission: 1861." Social Welfare History Project. April 09, 2015. Accessed June 06, 2019.
- <sup>38</sup> Livermore. *My Story of the War*, 119-120.
- <sup>39</sup> Richard H. Hall. *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*. (Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 121-122.
- <sup>40</sup> Blanton and Cook, 2.
- <sup>41</sup> Lauren Cook Burgess. *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Pvt. Lyons Wakeman, 153<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, New York State Volunteers, 1862-1864*. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 82. Sarah Wakeman's body is buried in Chalmette National Cemetery in New Orleans beneath a headstone bearing her enlisted name, Lyons Wakeman.
- <sup>42</sup> Matthew Gallman, ed., *The Civil War Chronicle: The Only Day-By-Day Portrait of America's Tragic Conflict As Told By Soldiers, Journalists, Politicians, Farmers, Nurses, Slaves, And Other Eyewitnesses* (New York: Gramercy Books, 2003), 290.
- <sup>43</sup> Lauren Cook Burgess. *An Uncommon Soldier*, 1.
- <sup>44</sup> "Another Female Soldier." *Daily Evansville Journal*. (Evansville, Ind.), 29 Nov. 1862.
- <sup>45</sup> *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 25 Jan. 1863.
- <sup>46</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Evening Star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 15 March 1864.
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<https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/6thInf/6thInfMain.htm>.
- <sup>47</sup> "Female Soldiers: Two Women Discovered in the Union Uniform." *New York Times*. (New York, New York), 26 Aug 26, 1864.
- <sup>48</sup> "A Strange Story of a Female Spy." *The Jeffersonian Democrat*. (Chardon, Ohio), 16 Aug. 1861.
- <sup>49</sup> "Railroad Accident." *The Athens Post*. (Athens, Tenn.), 28 Feb. 1862.
- <sup>50</sup> "Female Soldier." *Wilmington Journal*. (Wilmington, N.C.), 08 May 1862.
- <sup>51</sup> "A Girl Soldier." *Yorkville Enquirer*. (Yorkville, S.C.), 12 June 1862.
- <sup>52</sup> "Female Soldiers." *The Daily Evansville Journal*. (Evansville, Ind.), 30 Jan. 1863.
- <sup>53</sup> *The New York herald*. (New York [N.Y.]), 18 Dec. 1863.
- <sup>54</sup> *Evansville Daily Journal*. (Evansville, Ind.), 25 March 1865.
- <sup>55</sup> *Potter Journal*. (Coudersport, Pa.), 24 May 1865.
- <sup>56</sup> Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, 204.
- <sup>57</sup> Eric Foner, "My Life as a Historian," in *Historian's and Race*, edited by Paul A. Cimbala and Robert F. Himmelberg (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 96.
- <sup>58</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference: 1640-1670," in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs*, (University of North Carolina, 1996), 115.
- <sup>59</sup> Blanton and Cook, 23.
- <sup>60</sup> Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, 205.
- <sup>61</sup> Blanton and Cook, 67 & 123.
- <sup>62</sup> Blanton and Cook, 29.
- <sup>63</sup> "Female Soldiers: Two Women Discovered in the Union Uniform." *New York Times*. (New York, New York), 26 Aug 26, 1864.
- <sup>64</sup> "Female Soldier." *Wilmington Journal*. (Wilmington, N.C.), 08 May 1862.



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- <sup>65</sup> Loreta Janeta Velazquez, *The Woman in Battle: A Narrative of the Exploits, Adventures, and Travels of Madame Loreta Janeta Velazquez, Otherwise Known as Lieutenant Harry T. Buford, Confederate States Army* (Richmond, VA: Dustin, Gilman & Co., 1876), 53.
- <sup>66</sup> "A Female Soldier." *The Iowa Transcript*. (Toledo, Tama County, Iowa), 17 March 1864.
- <sup>67</sup> "A Female Veteran." *The Alleghenian*. (Ebensburg, Pa.), 02 June 1864.
- <sup>68</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Evening Star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 24 June 1864.
- <sup>69</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Evening Star*. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 30 June 1864.
- <sup>70</sup> "A Female Soldier." *The Abingdon Virginian*. (Abingdon [Va.]), 30 Jan. 1863.
- <sup>71</sup> *The Daily Gate City*. (Keokuk, Iowa), 07 Sept. 1863.
- <sup>72</sup> "A Female Soldier from Maine." *Portland Daily Press*. (Portland, Me.), 05 Jan. 1864.
- <sup>73</sup> National Archives Records Administration, "Veteran Reserve Corps (VRC), 1863-1865" (RR #920, Washington D.C., unknown), 1. Retrieved 21 April 2019 from <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/civil-war/veteran-reserve-corps.pdf>. The Veteran Reserve Corps was assembled with soldiers previously injured or suffering illness in the line of duty and who were no longer able to fight but could still perform garrison duty.
- <sup>74</sup> "Female Soldiers." *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*. (Santa Fe, N.M.), 06 May 1865.
- <sup>75</sup> *Alexandria gazette*. (Alexandria, D.C.), 13 Sept. 1864.
- <sup>76</sup> "A Female Soldier." *The Iowa Transcript*. (Toledo, Tama County, Iowa), 17 March 1864.
- <sup>77</sup> Blanton and Cook, 41.
- <sup>78</sup> Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, 128.
- <sup>79</sup> Blanton and Cook, 41-42.
- <sup>80</sup> Blanton and Cook, 38.
- <sup>81</sup> Lauren Cook Burgess. *An Uncommon Soldier*, 58.
- <sup>82</sup> "More Female Soldiers." *Hillsdale Standard*. (Hillsdale, Mich.), 25 Feb. 1862.
- <sup>83</sup> "Upwards of 150 Female Soldiers." *The Aegis & Intelligencer*. (Bel Air, Md.), 17 June 1864.
- <sup>84</sup> Canaday, Margot. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 11.
- <sup>85</sup> Canaday, *Straight State*, 13.
- <sup>86</sup> Blanton and Cook, 201-2.
- <sup>87</sup> Randy Shilts. *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays & Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1994), 14.
- <sup>88</sup> "A 'Bould Sojer Boy.'" *Cincinnati Daily Press*. (Cincinnati [Ohio]), 02 Jan. 1862.
- <sup>89</sup> "Lizzie Compton- The Soldier Girl." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 04 March 1864.
- <sup>90</sup> Jennie Hodgers, Aka Private Albert Cashier (U.S. National Park Service) <https://www.nps.gov/articles/jennie-hodgers-aka-private-albert-cashier.htm>
- <sup>91</sup> Blanton and Cook, 26.
- <sup>92</sup> "A Recruit That Wouldn't Do." *Cleveland Morning Leader*. (Cleveland [Ohio]), 26 July 1862.
- <sup>93</sup> "Female Soldier." *Chicago Tribune*. (Chicago, Ill.), 10 Feb. 1865.
- <sup>94</sup> "Upwards of 150 Female Soldiers." *The Aegis & Intelligencer*. (Bel Air, Md.), 17 June 1864.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Blanton and Cook, *They Fought Like Demons*, 27.
- <sup>97</sup> Blanton and Cook, *They Fought Like Demons*, 50.
- <sup>98</sup> Blanton and Cook, 48.
- <sup>99</sup> Stephen Currie, *Women of the Civil War* (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2003), 80.
- <sup>100</sup> Blanton and Cook, *They Fought Like Demons*, 46.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid
- <sup>102</sup> Blanton and Cook, *They Fought Like Demons*, 47.
- <sup>103</sup> "The Female Soldier." *The Weekly Ottumwa Courier*. (Ottumwa, Iowa), 10 Sept. 1863.
- <sup>104</sup> "Eventful History of a Soldier Woman." *The Highland Weekly News*. (Hillsborough [Hillsboro], Highland County, Ohio), 08 Oct. 1863.
- <sup>105</sup> *New York Times* (1857-1922); Aug 26, 1864; ProQuest Historical Newspapers
- <sup>106</sup> Velazquez, *The Woman in Battle*, pp. 59-60.
- <sup>107</sup> "The Female Lieutenant." *Staunton Spectator*. (Staunton, Va.), 22 Sept. 1863.

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- <sup>108</sup> Blanton and Cook, *They Fought Like Demons*, 74.
- <sup>109</sup> "A Female Soldier." *The Iowa Transcript*. (Toledo, Tama County, Iowa), 17 March 1864.
- <sup>110</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 07 May 1863.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>112</sup> Hall, 83.
- <sup>113</sup> *Cleveland Morning Leader*. (Cleveland [Ohio]), 10 Sep. 1864.
- <sup>114</sup> Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, 71.
- <sup>115</sup> Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, 72-73.
- <sup>116</sup> "More Female Soldiers." *Hillsdale Standard*. (Hillsdale, Mich.), 25 Feb. 1862.
- <sup>117</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Daily Register*. (Wheeling, W. Va.), 22 Dec. 1863.
- <sup>118</sup> "Female Soldiers." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 06 April 1864.
- <sup>119</sup> "Female Soldiers: Two Women Discovered in the Union Uniform." *New York Times*. (New York, New York), 26 Aug 26, 1864.
- <sup>120</sup> "A Missouri Woman as a Cavalry Soldier." *New York Times*. (New York, New York), 31 Dec 1866.
- <sup>121</sup> "The Raleigh Conservative gives the following account of this female soldier." *The Western Democrat*. (Charlotte, N.C.), 11 April 1865.
- <sup>122</sup> "The Female Lieutenant." *Staunton Spectator*. (Staunton, Va.), 22 Sept. 1863.
- <sup>123</sup> *Evansville Daily Journal*. (Evansville, Ind.), 25 March 1865.
- <sup>124</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Daily Register*. (Wheeling, W. Va.), 22 Dec. 1863.
- <sup>125</sup> "Arrest of a Woman in Soldier's Uniform." *Cincinnati Daily Press* [Ohio], 22 Jan. 1862.
- <sup>126</sup> *New York Times* (1857-1922); Dec 26, 1864; ProQuest Historical Newspapers
- <sup>127</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*. (Alexandria, D.C.), 16 May 1862.
- <sup>128</sup> *Rutland Weekly Herald*. (Rutland, Vt.), 09 April 1863.
- <sup>129</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 11 June 1863.
- <sup>130</sup> *New York Times* (1857-1922); Oct 9, 1861; ProQuest Historical Newspapers
- <sup>131</sup> "A Woman in Soldier's Clothes- Very Natural Surprise of a Reporter." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. [volume] (Chicago, Ill.), 06 May 1862.
- <sup>132</sup> Hall, 123.
- <sup>133</sup> "Romantic." *Cincinnati Daily Press*. (Cincinnati [Ohio]), 09 Dec. 1861.
- <sup>134</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Grand Haven News*. (Grand Haven, Mich.), 07 Sept. 1864.
- <sup>135</sup> "A Female Soldier in Camp Dennison." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 03 Sept. 1863.
- <sup>136</sup> "Another Female Soldier." *North Branch Democrat*. (Tunkhannock, Pa.), 28 Oct. 1863.
- <sup>137</sup> Blanton and Cook, 92.
- <sup>138</sup> Ibid
- <sup>139</sup> "A Female Soldier- Her Sad History." *Big Blue Union*. (Marysville, Kan.), 26 March 1864.
- <sup>140</sup> *Daily National Republican*. (Washington, D.C.), 17 June 1865.
- <sup>141</sup> "Antietam Cemetery: Its Neglected Condition: What is Proposed to be Done." *Chicago Tribune*. [volume] (Chicago, Ill.), 11 June 1865.
- <sup>142</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 07 May 1863.
- <sup>143</sup> Blanton and Cook, 199.
- <sup>144</sup> Livermore. *My Story*, 113-114.
- <sup>145</sup> Livermore. *My Story*, 114.
- <sup>146</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*. [volume] (Chicago, Ill.), 14 April 1863.
- <sup>147</sup> "A Female Soldier." *The Abingdon Virginian*. (Abingdon [Va.]), 30 Jan. 1863.
- <sup>148</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*. (Chicago, Ill.), 06 Feb. 1864.
- <sup>149</sup> "Voting and Voters in Tennessee A Good Union Omen The Knoxville ..." *New York Times* (New York, NY) 21 Apr 1864.
- <sup>150</sup> "A Female Soldier from Maine." *Portland Daily Press*. (Portland, Me.), 05 Jan. 1864.
- <sup>151</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Journal of Freedom*. (Raleigh, N.C.), 28 Oct. 1865.
- <sup>152</sup> Hall, 78.
- <sup>153</sup> Blanton and Cook, 80.
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- <sup>157</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*. (Alexandria, D.C.), 13 Feb. 1863. "War News."
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- <sup>160</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 25 March 1864.
- <sup>161</sup> Blanton and Cook, 6.
- <sup>162</sup> "Female Soldier." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 29 Oct. 1863.
- <sup>163</sup> "Voting and Voters in Tennessee A Good Union Omen The Knoxville ..." *New York Times* (New York, NY) 21 Apr 1864.
- <sup>164</sup> "A Female Veteran." *The Alleghenian*. (Ebensburg, Pa.), 02 June 1864.
- <sup>165</sup> "Upwards of 150 Female Soldiers." *The Aegis & Intelligencer*. (Bel Air, Md.), 17 June 1864.
- <sup>166</sup> "Another Female 'Soger'" *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 24 Dec. 1863.
- <sup>167</sup> "Clippings." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 08 Jan. 1864.
- <sup>168</sup> "Female Soldiers." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 06 April 1864.
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- <sup>170</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Gallipolis Journal*. (Gallipolis, Ohio), 07 May 1863.
- <sup>171</sup> *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond [Va.]), 08 June 1861.
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- <sup>173</sup> *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 07 Nov. 1862.
- <sup>174</sup> *Daily Register*. (Wheeling, W. Va.), 04 April 1864.
- <sup>175</sup> *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*. [volume] (Santa Fe, N.M.), 06 May 1865.
- <sup>176</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 25 March 1864.
- <sup>177</sup> *The National Republican*. (Washington, D.C.), 17 Sept. 1861.
- <sup>178</sup> "Female Soldiers." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 06 April 1864.
- <sup>179</sup> Blanton and Cook, 155.
- <sup>180</sup> "Female Soldier." *Wilmington Journal*. (Wilmington, N.C.), 08 May 1862.
- <sup>181</sup> *Wilmington Journal*. (Wilmington, N.C.), 12 Jan. 1865.
- <sup>182</sup> *Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph*. (Ashtabula, Ohio), 25 April 1863.
- The Caledonian*. (St. Johnsbury, Vt.), 17 April 1863.
- <sup>183</sup> "A Female Soldier- Her Sad History." *Big Blue Union*. (Marysville, Kan.), 26 March 1864.
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- Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph*. (Ashtabula, Ohio), 12 March 1864.
- <sup>184</sup> Blanton and Cook, 149.
- <sup>185</sup> "Discovery of a Female Soldier in the Union Army." *Muscatine Weekly Journal*. (Muscatine, Iowa), 08 Jan. 1864.
- <sup>186</sup> "Lizzie Compton- The Soldier Girl." *Daily Ohio Statesman*. (Columbus, Ohio), 04 March 1864.
- <sup>187</sup> "Discovery of a Female Soldier in the Union Army." *Muscatine Weekly Journal*. (Muscatine, Iowa), 08 Jan. 1864.
- <sup>188</sup> "A Female Soldier." *Daily Register*. (Wheeling, W. Va.), 22 Dec. 1863.
- <sup>189</sup> "A Thrilling Narrative: Miss Maj. Pauline Cushman, the Federal Scout and Spy." From the *Detroit Tribune*, May 24. *New York Times* May 28, 1864
- <sup>190</sup> "A Thrilling Narrative: Miss Maj. Pauline Cushman, the Federal Scout and Spy." From the *Detroit Tribune*, May 24. *New York Times* May 28, 1864
- <sup>191</sup> "Eventful History of a Soldier Woman." *The Highland Weekly News*. (Hillsborough [Hillsboro], Highland County, Ohio), 08 Oct. 1863.
- <sup>192</sup> "Turned up Again." *Daily Intelligencer*. (Wheeling, Va. [W. Va.]), 14 July 1864.
- <sup>193</sup> "Turned up Again." *Daily Intelligencer*. (Wheeling, Va. [W. Va.]), 14 July 1864.
- <sup>194</sup> "Female Soldier." *Portland Daily Press*. (Portland, Me.), 29 Oct. 1864.

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## **Sexuality, gender roles, cross-dressing**

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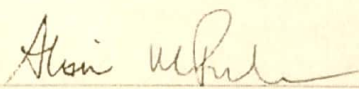
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**"Women Who Wear the Breeches"**  
**The Representation of Female Civil War Soldiers in Mid-Nineteenth Century**  
**Newspapers**

by MAJ Danielle Leone-Poe

APPROVED BY: \*

  
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5/1/2019  
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